THE COUNTRY FAITH

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TORONTO

THE COUNTRY FAITH

BY

FREDERICK F. SHANNON

MINISTER OF CENTRAL CHURCH, CHICAGO

Author of "The Infinite Artist," "The Economic Eden," "The Land of Beginning Again," "God's Faith in Man," "The Enchanted Universe," "The Breath in the Winds," "The Soul's Atlas," etc.

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TO

MR. AND MRS.

WILLIAM H. MINER

As one lingers in this blessed place, the meaning of Heart's Delight Farm gradually unfolds itself. Cultivation of the soil culminates in character; harnessing the forces of earth and sky looks toward a richer harvest of the heart; the "loving care" everywhere in evidence is for the growing of manhood and womanhood. Thus are the purposes of the Great Husbandman—the Infinite Farmer—being realized through you. Blessed are the people who are making money make men! *The joy of the Lord is theirs indeed. May a steadily enlarging company of joy-makers, possessing your spirit and ideals, grow up in America! Such souls will do much toward solving our national problems, as well as become royal helpers in the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. Business, Education, and the Church—in a word,* Christianity at work *—that is the meaning of Heart's Delight Farm to one to whom you have given and taught much. You are true disciples of "The Country Faith," and to you I dedicate this volume in gratitude and thanksgiving.*

FREDERICK F. SHANNON

Heart's Delight Farm,
Chazy, New York,
July 18, 1922.

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THE COUNTRY FAITH

THE COUNTRY FAITH

Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee.—Job xii. 7.

One of man's most faithful teachers is the earth in which his physical nature is deeply rooted. Always the wise Earth Mother is signaling to her human child, in the hope that he may hearken to her voice and obey her inviolable laws. With a less scientific appreciation of his world, the ancient man had a childlike poetic appreciation of it which the modern man can ill afford to lose. In our social disorderliness we need very much to get wisdom from the order and unhurrying haste of that society of social forces always at work in the physical universe. For, though a ceaseless struggle is going on in Nature, there is a certain quietude and harmony at her inmost centers which are humanly contagious. That is one reason why elect souls have ever sought woodland sanctuaries, meadowy chapels, and mountain cathedrals. "The tree," says James Lane Allen, "throws out its arm at you with imploring tenderness, with what Wordsworth called *the soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs.*"

In these treed and flowered spaces of unwalled quiet, souls seek and find a healing balm, meaningful tranquillity which restores to their ruffled intensity something akin to Nature's own profounder peace and

majesty. Somehow the coolness of the hills drops cooling quietness into the heart. And were we trained to respond more wisely to Nature's medicinal ministry, we should graciously humanize and pass her teachings joyously along to our fellow-learners in the school of life. For whenever and wherever we speak to the earth, it never fails to teach us—about God, about Man, about Destiny. The author of Job understood this and would doubtless sound a grand amen to the words of a modern man and lover of the universe. "How idle," he says, "to choose a random sparkle here or there, when the indwelling necessity plants the rose of beauty on the brow of chaos, and discloses the central intention of Nature to be harmony and joy."

Therefore, in our study this morning, I want you to go with me into God's vast green and golden out-of-doors. Yet I do not want us to go alone, blind, and untaught by the Holy Spirit, as many disciples of the fields and woods and waters are wont to do. Rather, I want us to go in the spirit of those at the entrance of whose farmhouse the title-words of this sermon are cut in bronze. One dew-pearled morning, as the liberal sun poured his light and warmth down upon the thousands of acres composing Heart's Delight Farm yonder on the shores of Lake Champlain, I lingered before a bronze tablet and read these words:

> Here in the country's heart where the grass is green,
> Life is the same sweet life it e'er hath been.
> Trust in God still lives, and the bell at morn
> Floats with the thought of God o'er the rising corn
> God comes down in the rain and the crop grows tall;
> This is the Country Faith—and the best of all.

But in illustrating our theme, I want you to journey with me from northern New York to eastern Kentucky,

For one beautiful and salutary feature of Nature is this: It does not change with changing sections. Nature calmly ignores our norths and souths and easts and wests, our Americas and Europes and Asias. Nature cares not a fig for our Republicans and Democrats and Socialists and Bolsheviki; she impartially flogs the last one of us when we break her rules, no matter how vociferously we howl about our partisanship and patriotism—which may be the last refuge of a scoundrel, thought wise old Samuel Johnson. Also, Nature laughs very loud at our "rising tide of color," caring not at all whether the children suckled at her breast are white, black, red, or yellow. Exceedingly cosmopolitan, the one true Democrat, is good old Mother Nature! She plays fair with her many-colored children, but she likewise demands that her many-colored children play fair with her. Imagining that they are fooling Nature, men and women, the world around and the ages long, are stupidly fooling themselves.

For many summers I have taken a walk which has added a deepening joy to existence. Out from Louisa, Kentucky, there is a hill-path very courteous to pilgrim feet and most obligingly rewardful to seeing eyes. Only, one sometimes feels that there are not enough eyes to take in all the alluring things which cry aloud to be seen! That wild rose, setting its frail jar of perfume amid the nourishing roots of a lightning-struck, dying tree—who would cheat himself out of just one glimpse? That cardinal yonder—who would not like several pairs of eyes for his blood-red suit and a like equipment of ears for his song? That pine-crowned hill—with trees which are green the whole year through, as if to keep forever green the memory

of those whose dust sleeps beneath their aromatic, harplike, wind-smitten branches—who does not like to pause here in mid-June and watch the universe go by? That old rail fence, which worms its way up hill and down, like a huge, weather-bitten serpent too old to crawl—why, that fence shuts in the old home with its childhood dreams and loves and memories! Yes; that fence used to seem so far away to childish eyes that it marked the end of the world.

Well, there are so many things in the dear, sun-colored earth that want to be spoken to! Yet, we must hurry along, or we shall never get to the end of our walk. So, as simple illustrations of the country faith, I want you to share with me some of the things it was my privilege to see. "The more I think of it," said Ruskin, "I find this conclusion more impressed upon me—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what it *saw* in a plain way." If we honestly see and speak to the earth, it will luminously and inspiringly teach us.

I

The first lesson from the teaching earth was a set of silent morning glory chimes. There they hung, the three of them, in their rich blue tower of color. Yet, on looking more closely, I found that two of the three bell-shaped flowers were already fading. Unequal to the growing heat of the sun, they were all doomed to a transient existence. For it is just the nature of this flower to curl up and wither away in the face of the sun.

Looking at these flowers, faded and fading, somehow I could not keep back that wail of the Hebrew prophet,

"O Israel," he cried, "thy goodness is like the morning dew, that passeth early away." Now, it is perfectly natural for the flower to fade and for the dewdrop to vanish; but how unnatural that our goodness, too, should be so fickle and ephemeral! We say it is easy and natural to be bad, so hard and difficult to be good. But is the saying altogether true? A thousand times, no! It is false to the core.

Studied wisely and with insight, the universe is unquestionably on the side of goodness. Moreover, it proves that it is not only *not* easy to be bad, but, in the long run, the hardest and most difficult of achievements. Let us honestly face this proposition for a moment. Take the thoroughly bad man; I mean the clever, ingenious, brilliant student of wickedness, not just the stupid, the ignorant, the brutally non-moral specimen. Suppose your exceedingly capable criminal invested the same amount of ability in doing noble deeds that he does in doing ignoble. Instead of being a fugitive from justice, a prisoner in dungeons, and finally a subject for the gallows or electric chair, would he not be, on the contrary, a useful, moral, and religious member of society? In brief, his capacity for achieving bad things, if properly used, would certainly carry him far along the road of honor and integrity. This must be so, after making due allowance for the heredity and environment of every efficient criminal. Society may be partial, unjust, even cruel. But there is not a scintilla of partiality in the nature of things, whose light never failed to dazzle Socrates. Saying to the unjust, "I will recompense you with unjustness," Nature likewise says to the good, "I will make your heart thrill to the awe of goodness." Wherefore, says Paul, let him that stole, steal no more, but rather

work. Is this just an honesty-is-the-best-policy exhortation? By no means! It rests upon the foundations of morality. It is better to work than to steal because man is the citizen of an honest universe. If tricksters put the same amount of energy into honorable schemes that they put into dishonorable ones, the law of the conservation of righteousness would see to it that their labor is not in vain.

O, little flower by the June highway, thanks be to thee for thy beauty-blown message! Even thy fading loveliness has pointed to flowers of truth that fade not. Not *away* from the toil and the fret and the worry, but *in* the toil and the fret and the worry, thou hast taught me to look for the first article of the country faith: Goodness that makes each day as fresh as silver drops of dew, as deep as the blue of your drooping petals, as substantial as yonder hilltops that sublimely beckon. Is not this the end of the matter, and hath not all been heard? "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Does not the truth of the wise ancient perfectly match the truth of the wise modern—Wordsworth—who, in thinking of duty, exclaims:

> Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As is the smile upon thy face;
> Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
> And fragrance in thy footing treads;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are
> fresh and strong.

II

Yet, right there on the climbing slopes of those morning-washed hills, are pictures forever memorable to the country-grown lad. They are spider webs—delicate, gossamer, filmy tents set up over night. Who would forget the dew-tipped dawns pouring their floods of gold from over the Hills of Yesteryears? You went out, O barefoot boy, through the fields of morning, dashing the night-dews from the soft pink globes of clover, whistling and singing just because your mouth was a kind of æolian harp and your voice an instrument which Life borrowed for chanting a tune to its own lyric loveliness. Yonder on the hilltop, knee-deep in clover, feeds the blazed-faced old mare. At sight of you, she begins to move away; for the law of association, of horse sense, has taught her that you and the plow waiting in yonder furrow have definite designs on her comfort and energy. So, she wishes to elude such an unelusive creature, and frankly says so by promptly seeking other sections of the pasture field.

But where is your bridle, lad? Don't need one? Bareback and bridleless to the barn, eh? Certainly! Old Beck understands. That running away—why, that is just make-believe, downright pretense and horse-hypocrisy! She will be waiting yonder over the brow of the hill for you to climb on to her fat, round back and dig your heels into her soft, bulging sides. And then? But, ah, me! what angel with a harp of gold could accompany the song of a barefoot boy, galloping across luscious fields of clover, glistening with the dew-hung tents of ten thousand master-workmen, and all—clover, spider webs, horse, and lad—played upon by an air of coolness wafted down from the shores of the

Infinite Sea? Yet, to be concrete, take just a single spider web. Let us talk to that for a little while. If we are wise, it will teach us much; otherwise, it will have nothing to say; for not even Plato himself could do much for a quiescent, lethargic, closed mind. Looking at that spider web this morning in June, I remembered reading many, many years ago that the science of astronomy could not have reached its modern development were it not for the help afforded by this marvelous little creature, which has found a scientific Homer in the great Fabre. Then I began to question whether I had ever really read a statement similar to the one just referred to. Perhaps it was only a vagrant fancy that floated about in the atmosphere of my being, ultimately taking up its home in the cobwebs decorating the rafters of my brain! But the fancy refused to be turned out of doors; it fairly haunted me. Troubled by this mental ghost disturbing the waters of my subconscious pool, and yet all the while sturdily refusing to come out into the open and declare itself, I sat down and wrote to Professor Edward Emerson Barnard, of the great Yerkes observatory at Williams Bay, Wisconsin, telling him of my quandary. As you know, Dr. Barnard is one of the foremost astronomers in the world. He answered my question at once. You will see, from his remarkable letter, that my fancy was hardly fanciful enough! He says:

"All accurate measurements made at the telescope, and, indeed, also in measuring celestial photographs, are dependent on the spider's web. I might go so far as to say that our knowledge of the dimensions of the universe is due to the humble spider. We measure with its web the positions and distances of the stars and the path of the vagrant comet. With the spider's

web we also measure the diameters of all the celestial bodies, except the fixed stars, whose angular diameters are too small for such measurements. It is indestructible by the heat of the sun, so that we can measure objects on the sun's surface by it. For all these most accurate measures of astronomy, two parallel spider webs (one only of which is movable) are generally used, stretched across two frames in an instrument called a *filar micrometer*. It is not that we cannot make finer threads of some other materials. Quartz fibers can be made finer than a spider's web, but are not so satisfactory. Indeed, nothing is so satisfactory as the spider's web. So we continue to use it."

My respect for the spider has grown tremendously since receiving that letter from this celebrated scientist. The next time you women go about the rooms of your house ruthlessly sweeping (Mrs. Shannon says that it is not in good taste to even suggest such a thing, much less to say it right out!) the cobwebs from the corners, please do it a bit more gently! I know most of us are by the spiders as some of us are by the mice—we don't like them in the least! Indeed, some of us, confirmed rheumatics that we are, can manage to throw a flip-flop every time a poor, innocent, little mouse comes playfully across the floor. Seated one night in a coach filled with passengers, I heard a brakeman whisper in my ears: "There it goes—right there! But don't say anything about it; it would cause a panic; we simply cannot keep the little beasts off of our trains." Well, as I had been made the unwilling custodian of diplomatic information, I did not say one word about that hobo mouse traveling in all the luxury of a lightning express train. Moreover, I positively refuse to say whether I myself surreptitiously sought another coach,

or whether I waited, with terror and misgiving, to share the fate of my unsuspecting fellow-passengers!

Ah, but that little spider and his wondrous web! In the light of this great man's letter, the heavens not only declare the glory of God; they declare, also, the wonder of the meanest and most insignificant of his creatures. Speak to the earth, O man, and it shall teach thee the interdependence of the infinitely large and the infinitely small. As the whole vast universe is a League of Relations, no wonder that mankind are determined to have a League of Nations.

III

Furthermore, as I talked to the earth on that summer morning, did it not teach wondrous things through the caterpillar I observed crawling through the dust at my feet? Truly, what a creature! And what colorings—what gorgeous dresses these creeping, gayly-colored maidens trail right through the dirt! Nor are they in the least meticulous as to what happens to their golden finery. And what a career that brown, black, yellow worm is doomed to follow!

The psalmist speaks of the world and man never continuing in one stay; but the same may be truly said, also, of the caterpillar. As we know, this marvelous creature passes through four distinct stages of development. The caterpillar I saw had come from one of hundreds or even thousands of microscopic egg cells. Consider the prevision and foresight—instinctive, mental, or whatever you choose to call it—which have been made in depositing these tiny eggs on the food-plant. Each egg is placed on the precise plant which will best nourish the infant soon to be born.

Moths even pluck hairs from their own bodies to make a nest for their young. Their little ones are thus concealed from enemies or protected from rigorous weather.

The second is the larval or grub state. This is the time when, according to Linnæus, the "insect masks or hides the true character or imago of the species." He was dictating the second chapter of his autobiography down there in the dust when I met him; there are still two chapters to be written before his life-history is complete. It may be well to add, just here, that I was looking upon this suggestive creature in his most unattractive period. Herein does he resemble the gawky, growing boy—neither a child nor a man—when nobody loves him but God and his mother. For the caterpillar has earned an unsavory reputation. What an appetite he has! Especially fond of the food-plants grown by civilized man, he deliberately helps himself to them in a most uncivilized fashion. If we extend our survey of the caterpillar until it includes the Lepidoptera family, we shall make the acquaintance of a host of ruthless destroyers. Some years they denude entire forests and whole fields together. The Polyphemus caterpillar, according to Trouvelot, weighs at birth only one-twentieth of a grain. But his voracity is so immense that in fifty days he weighs 207 grains, and has consumed 120 oak leaves, weighing three-fourths of a pound.

Or, to take another illustration from the same general field, in fifty-six days the silkworm eats 86,000 times its original weight. If it were not for the fact that caterpillars are destroyed by their countless foes, they themselves would soon destroy the entire vegetable kingdom, leaving not a wrack behind.

The third stage is called the pupal and usually quiescent stage. This is the time when the worm is preparing to leave his wormlike career. The last work he does as a worm is truly wonderful. He makes his cocoon out of silken threads. And what threads! Secreting a fluid by his spinning glands, the material for his silken couch is produced by the hardening of this fluid. He may make his silken couch by winding these threads round and round himself, or he may bind into the cocoon his "own hairs, chips of wood, or other materials, or tie down rolled leaves, or form a web-like network hung like a bag or a hammock from some support, or make a fuzzy mass in some crevice or among leaves and twigs." So, he patiently waits in this chrysalis stage for the resurrection trumpets to sound! Beginning as an egg, he became a worm, and is now a pupa; he lives in hope of becoming a gorgeous butterfly.

The fourth stage has arrived at last. Now does he come timidly but quickly forth from his chrysalis case. Has he not discovered a strange new world indeed? From that tiny egg his mother laid on the underside of a leaf, he has journeyed up through the wilderness of worm and chrysalis until he now dwells in the Promised Land of the Butterfly—a gorgeous, golden waif of the air! Emerging from his chrysalis, he clings for a little while to a rock or a twig, fanning his flaccid wings, thus injecting blood into them from the thorax and abdomen. But not for long does he tremble and quiver on the edge of his glorious new world. What purple seas of morn and silver lakes of noon and lustrous oceans of evening are awaiting his unfolding wings! And now the thrilling moment has come! No longer germ, worm, or pupa, he soars through the air, a

kind of many-colored dream embodied in golden robes and flashing wings.

Yet, in speaking to the earth that I might be taught through that caterpillar, did not Someone else keep talking to me? "Beloved, now are we the children of God"—these were the very words I continued hearing —"and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."

Is not our own career also marked by four stages? Biologically speaking, our bodies are fashioned by God in wisdom, awe, and mystery. Whether from cell, egg, germ, spore, or seed, Man, in the Creative Goodness, begins his ascent from realms of majestic lowliness. "Thou knowest not the way of the Spirit," says the writer of Ecclesiastes, "nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child." "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!" exclaims the Psalmist. "Marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." In his striking book on "The Stages of Human Life," Dr. J. Lionel Taylor has a chapter called "Before the Beginnings of Being." Yet, even then, the Eternal Evolutionist was marvelously working in secret and in silence. "In the beginning—GOD!" That is the proper way to speak of origins, whether they be earth, heavens, universes, electrons, cells, angels, or men. Before the beginnings of being, there is always the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yet, if the creation of the body is wonderful, what shall we say of the creation of the soul? Very little, indeed, because we know nothing as to the when or how of its creation. The four theories of the genesis of the soul, as stated by F. W. H. Myers, are as follows: First, the Creationists, who hold that a soul is created by a fresh act of God for each new body. Second, the Traducianists, who hold that the soul is engendered by the parents, being transmitted like the bodily characteristics. Third, the Infusionists, who hold that the soul preëxisted elsewhere, but is infused into the body at some given moment. Fourth, the Transmigrationists, developing the last doctrine, who hold that the soul, thus infused into man, has previously inhabited the bodies of other men or animals. Thus have thinkers striven to account for the unaccountable. Theories come and go, but the Inscrutable Fact abides. After all is said, no words outtop the grandeur of those written in Genesis: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him"; "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Whether man's physical body, the temporary home of his undying soul, was developed in a long or short time, in a million years or in a moment, the whole, body and soul, is referred to the creative work of God. That the process has been an exceedingly long one there is no reason to doubt. But whether long or short, the soul abides in mystery, and the hour of its awakening to self-consciousness in the body is one of the supreme wonders of the universe. Then do awful and mysterious forces begin to stir within its unfathomed depths. Here it may enter that endless period of development in Christlikeness, which

is the goal of the worlds. Having discovered its spiritual wings, even as the caterpillar at last unfolds its rainbowed pinions, the soul begins its infinite career in conscious fellowship with its God and Father. "Now," it repeats in unison with its companions and pilgrims of the Heavenly Way, "are we the children of God; and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." Winging and singing through the purifying heavens of Love, this is the refrain of the apostolic song: "And every one that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Thanks to thee, O little creature of the dust! You are a glowing syllable in the literature of the undeciphered. I shall always associate my caterpillar with the lines of Alice Freeman Palmer on "The Butterfly":

I hold you at last in my hand,
  Exquisite child of the air;
Can I ever understand
  How you grew to be so fair?

You came to this linden-tree
  To taste its delicious sweet,
I sitting here in the shadow and shine
  Playing around its feet.

Now I hold you fast in my hand,
  You marvelous butterfly,
Till you help me to understand
  The eternal mystery.

From that creeping thing in the dust
  To this shining bliss in the blue!
God, give me courage to trust
  I can break my chrysalis, too!

THE COUNTRY FAITH—II

Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee.—Job xii. 7.

I

Going down the wooing ways of that June morning, I also met a land-tortoise or terrapin. He was an old friend. I used to meet him down on the farm. Sometimes he would crawl through the garden, the roadway, the cornfield, or under the oak trees in the yard. But he was never very communicative. Indeed, so bent is he on leading the life of a recluse that he carries his shell-house right along with him. On human approach, he retires into this so quickly that he at once classifies himself as a most unsociable creature. There was a saying extant among my boyhood friends that, once he closed his mouth on your finger, he would not let go until it thundered. I was always careful never to test the truth of the saying by experiment.

But the characteristic of the tortoise which has always impressed me most is his capacity to retire into himself. Wanting very much to speak with him and be taught by him, yet he seemed determined to have no word with me. As in other days when I drew near, so now he silently shut the doors, pulled down the windows, drew the blinds, and swiftly disappeared within his striped and polished house of shell. Yet, in his abrupt refusal to talk, did he not teach me something already too well known among my own kind?

"How like the religion of some folk!" I exclaimed as he slammed the door fairly in my face. First, in the matter of religious dress parade. Without trying to force an unseemly parallel, there was an impressive leisureliness in the motion of my friend tortoise. When I caught up with him, he was not in the mood of hurry at all. He just seemed to be going nowhere and acted as if he had forever to reach his goal. Now, such an attitude toward life and the universe may be perfectly proper for a tortoise; but ah, me! what an accusing type of self-photography it does exhibit in a human being!

And yet, are there not people all around us who spend their time as if life were an idle stroll? One man strolls down the dollar-path. To be sure, as he chases the shining phantom, he not only spells motion but commotion. It is not so certain, however, when we inventory his desires, purposes, and ideals, that he can possibly come to anything higher than a lolling loafer in the true highways of being. When a man sets a dollar mark on the face of life, that face begins to make paralyzing squints at him. Quickly enough does he find the cosmos out of focus! And all because, notwithstanding his strenuous activity, he has no proper contacts with the life which is life indeed. Paradoxical though the words be, the fact is: He is an energetic idler in the roadways of existence.

Another man follows the notoriety path. Instead of crying, "A kingdom! A kingdom for a horse!" he sells his years, his genius, his soul for a name. Tremendously active through it all, he is not one whit less an idler with reference to the great and honorable and unrepealable verities. I asked after a preacher in a certain town. "He is still there with the brass bells

on!" was the reply. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," says the proverb; but a good name seldom flies about with brass bells on. The explorers for cheap fame do indeed find it, but is it worth the finding? Even though self-nominated candidates for notoriety are successful in their verbally furious campaign, they are elected temporarily only, their tenure is fortunately brief and tragically inglorious. God has his own candidates for immortality and noble renown. Checked and thwarted in a thousand ways, they invariably arrive, but never "with brass bells on!" Those horrible, ear-splitting, devil-twanging monstrosities all take on the value of the dust-heap when God's good-named man, white with the lilies of grace and cool with the airs of faith, comes calmly by clothed in the robes of Christian righteousness. "He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street." And why? "Behold, I have put my Spirit upon him." Oh, yes, the world will brazenly hang brass bells upon us for so much "per"; but that Spirit upon Whom the universe momentarily depends —He alone can put the secret of eternal life upon our undying souls. What a terrible irony to be a loafer in the midst of terrific endeavor! Yet, in the white light of the nature of things, this is the doom of the dawdler. This is the law which operates impartially toward prince and peasant; for—

Kings must lay gold circlets down
In God's sepulchral ante-rooms,
The wear of Heaven's the thorny crown:
He paves His temples with their tombs.

O our towered altitudes!
O the lusters of our thrones!

What! old Time shall have his moods
Like Cæsars and Napoleons;

Have his towers and conquerors forth,
Till he, weary of the toys,
Put back Rameses in the earth
And break his Ninevehs and Troys.

Do not be a strenuous idler—that was the first message of the tortoise. But he gave me a second fully as important. Instantly retiring into the hidden recesses of his terrapin seclusion, he reminded me of certain human types one meets every day. For example, the loquacious mortals who talk about everything under the sun but the big things. Mention matters pertaining to the soul and they shut up like a—shall I say a clam? No; inasmuch as I was in a fragrant country lane and far from the surging sea, I will still cling to my tortoise friend and his facile genius for running into the house and bolting the doors.

Not otherwise do people act toward the imperial subject of religion. They talk politics, industry, society, markets, science, and novels with amazing frankness and ignorance, their tongues often being released by the motive power named their prejudiced viewpoint or selfish animus. But religion—God, Freedom, Immortality—never a syllable, save the sphinxlike, inarticulate mystery in which the whole subject seems to be conventionally wrapped. Not always, of course, is this so, but generally. The bill of exceptions is usually filed by that glib, superficial, cult-mongering individual, who has his physical being in countless areas from Maine to California; whose mental longitudes stretch all the way from Boston to Baalbek; whose spiritual latitudes are as wide as the spaces

measured by the desert of Sahara and as correspondingly dry.

Why should this be? Must men and women always escape from themselves through avenues of conventional prattle? Were the brain, the mouth, the lungs, and the atmosphere created for emitting vapid, meaningless sounds only? Why should one lease his tongue to verbal renters who pay in coppers of nonsensical weariness, when he may hire it to desirable homemakers whose returns are inspiringly fruitful words—veritable "apples of gold in pictures of silver"? Why, the thing is an abomination in the sight of the Lord and a fraud perpetrated against the soul itself. Are we so dead, my brothers, that stocks are live talk while souls are dry-as-dust nonentities? Must we always be in the receiving line to Mr. and Mrs. Fad and their silly progeny, and rarely or never at home to God and His Way with the soul—the pursuing and redeeming Christ?

Two very practical considerations should scourge us out of this terrapin-like attitude toward religious finality. The first is its stark unnaturalness. We are plainly abnormal when we ignore the rights of the soul. Every human being who vitally comes to himself bears witness to this truth. "How did I ever play the fool, and so stupidly?" That is one of the first questions invariably asked by the clever man who has existed at the circumference of being and then been mysteriously moved in toward the glowing center of life. Generally speaking, this is the feeling of all those newborn souls cited by Professor James in his classic work. There is the sense of smiting wonder that they did not make contact with God very much sooner than they did. One of the memorable cases is Benvenuto Cellini.

Soldier, sculptor, worker in gold and silver, he had the good fortune to be imprisoned in the Castle of Saint Angelo. The place was horrible beyond description. Rats, vermin, dampness, and cold are his grim companions. But in that dungeon he begins to think of God; in his den of squalor he has visions of a new universe. During one hour in the twenty-four a shaft of light plays over his gloom and doom. Getting a Bible, he reads it during that single hour when the daylight shone into his cell. Soon religious visions come to the birth; he writes hymns; he sings psalms like a human nightingale pouring forth his music in the dark. Thinking of the morrow, and of the festivities which Rome will then observe, he says to himself: "All these years past I celebrated this holiday with the vanities of the world: from this year henceforth I will do it with the divinity of God. And then I said to myself, 'O, how much more happy I am for this present life of mine than for all those things remembered.' "

What a commentary on "the buried life" of us all! True, we are born a long way from our deeper selves. But the tragedy is that we are content to remain buried beneath our mountains of mud, or else we make but wan and feeble efforts to set our souls within the cleansing tides of life that would bear us achievingly and triumphantly toward the Harbor of Home and its ever-deepening hospitality. In the true sense, it is abnormal and unnatural for men not to be spiritual and Christlike, because they are essentially spirits destined for careers in growing Christlikeness. As the telescope and photography yield the astronomer new depths of space sown with blazing worlds, so do spiritualized souls exhibit the deeper depths of reality awaiting exploration by the sons of God. That veteran of

the spiritual wars, that vernal old man who comes with songs of joy and shouts of victory to the dawn of heavenly mornings, after recounting his gains and losses, after speaking of achievements and progress which would dazzle ordinary folk, utters this extraordinary and sublime disclaimer. "Not that I have already obtained," says Paul, from a prison that outsplendors the Golden House of Nero, "or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren"—hear him call as he spiritually eyes the race-course of infinity and inbreathes new inspirations for his mounting resolution—"I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Oh, the challenge of it! The mental sinewiness of it! The white-hot concentration of it! The soul-athleticism of it! The magnificent, forthright heavenliness of it! Paul never whined about the vastness of the universe. He rejoiced so exultantly in being possessed by eternal life that he felt the vastness of the universe would have to become eternally vaster in order to furnish him a field in which to put forth the vigors and powers and purposes he had realized in Christ Jesus his Lord. Winged souls are not greatly perturbed by either infinite wastes of matter or infinite voids of space.

The second consideration is: The very abnormalness of a godless life is accentuated by the spiritual majesty of Jesus. Our Lord did not walk straight into the teeth of things with sugar-coated condiments of delusion, as much of our soft-headed modern morality

and mentality jejunely avers. Nevertheless, He did unbosom the Heart of Things, and He found It fair—wondrously fair and just and good. Behind all the terror of a universe in the making, Christ beheld the glory of the Shining Face. That Face is unutterably paternal; it has the two eyes of Fatherhood and Motherhood marvelously blended.. When Jesus said, "My Father," "Our Father," "Your Father," the music of the spheres took on new color-tones. Therefore, our little planet, lying like a pearl along the seashore of infinity, gleamed before Him in immeasurable worth and beauty. Soiled as earth is by sin, yet does He see the unquenched fires of loveliness and awe burning through its hidden depths. Everywhere Christ's vision of God is equal to the fact of God. No matter what long journeys He had made from the deeps of Godhead in quest of our humanity, on every hand Jesus found tokens of Divinity in the very world which chose to make Him a stranger and a felon rather than its Savior and Deliverer.

II

Nor must I forget Mother Hen, who greeted me by the roadside. She had a brood of fourteen chickens. As I undertook to count them, flitting about here and there, I was reminded of that delicious saying of Professor William Lyon Phelps: "In arithmetic I was always slow, but never sure!" With her large family to look after, she was as busy as a woman in house-cleaning time. Yet my colored friend and philosopher, John Pickerell, always said that a hen with one chicken makes more fuss than a hen with a dozen. At any rate, this is often true of the home having only one

child. The unfortunate feature is that both parents and child are frequently spoiled.

But is not that hen with her brood a concrete illustration of the Motherhood tenderly and watchfully fluttering throughout the whole creation? One of the grandest strains struck from the Isaian harp celebrates the Divine Motherhood nestling within the sanctuaries of the universe. Speaking of Zion, disheartened and discredited by her own wickedness, God says through His prophet: "Ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Borne—dandled—comforted! What caressing words are these! See that mother who carries her child on her hip, one arm gently holding the little one in position; see her fondly moving her child up and down on her knees; see her comforting her fretful, ill, or mistreated babe! These are the three pictures which the prophet employs to declare the brooding maternity in the nature of God. "As one whom his mother comforteth." But how does a mother comfort? Only two people can answer. First, the comforted child, and, second, the comforting mother. After all terms of endearment are exhausted, after all fond and wooing words are spoken, these two—the comforted child and the comforting mother—alone know the sweetness which flows from "the breasts of her consolations."

But to return to the teaching earth as it spoke to me through that hen and her brood. Did not our Lord and Master go to the mother hen for His figure of the rebellious city which broke His heart and then crucified Him? "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together,

even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Once it was my privilege to see the reality of the Master's figure enacted in a striking manner. I was driving an automobile through central Kentucky. Rounding a sharp curve in the road, I saw a mother hen with one chick immediately in front of me. At the approach of the car, she worked furiously and with all the redemptive passion of motherhood to get her child out of danger. But she failed. Then I witnessed something I shall remember as long as memory endures. After frantically trying and failing, she did that which only the sacrificial love and intelligence of motherhood is capable of doing. *She instantly sat down on her chick!* By the help of God, as I think, I managed to so steer the car that that feathered mother and her wing-protected child were not injured. Rarely have I been so thrilled and excited in my life. Of course the hen was considerably frustrated for the moment. But she soon recovered her motherly poise and went on about her out-of-doors housekeeping as if nothing had happened.

As if nothing had happened, did I say? But this unutterably glorious Something is ever at work throughout the universe. Have you considered that behind the struggle for existence there is the Spirit of sacrificial motherhood which makes for universal subsistence? I watched a battle-royal between blackbirds and sparrows over the possession of a birdhouse. Now bird nature, like human nature, is not at its best in a towering rage. Yet, as I watched those birds, it dawned upon me for the first time that something wondrously

sacred was at stake in their contest. It was nothing less than Motherhood itself! Behind those chattering blackbirds and quarreling sparrows, even *through* their obstreperous behavior, Motherhood was getting its valiant vindication and immortal self-assertion. And is not Motherhood, whether in birds or humans, infinitely greater than any individual or collective manifestation thereof? When Zion wailed: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me," God asked: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" This is both possible and probable, as experience shows. Yet, from in behind even this, here is the Voice that echoes the golden heart of Godhood: *"Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee."* Oh, speak to the Motherhood everywhere brooding and dreaming and singing through the earth, and it shall teach thee of the Godhead out of Whom all fatherhoods and motherhoods mysteriously and continuously come!

III

On my return trip, I came across one of the most interesting creatures in all the world. Walking through a sylvan way overarched by gnarled and widespreading oaks, I saw a boy standing yonder in the distance. Soon I heard his voice calling: "Hey, Bud!" Little thinking he was addressing me, I kept on walking toward him, but made no answer. All the more vociferously did he continue yelling: "Hey, Bud! Hey, Bud!" At last it dawned upon me that I was the object of his exclamations. I asked, as I approached him: "What do you want, boy?" "I want to know the way to town," was his quick reply. It seems that he

and his companion had gone out of the main highway and down over the side of the hill, picking blackberries. Coming back to the road, but now separated from his companion, he had "got turned around," as we say, and lost his sense of direction. As we walked along together, I asked, after telling him the right way home: "But how do you know that you are on the right road now?" "Gee whiz!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you say that this is the road?" "Yes," I countered, "but how do you know that I am telling you the truth?" There was a puzzled look in his eye—a curious twinkle—but only for a moment. "By gum!" he said, "I'm going to *trust* you, anyway!"

Had I seen or heard anything that June morning quite as fine and clean and beautiful as the brave and eloquent trust of that lad among the hills? I think of the loveliness of my morning glories; of the wonder of my spider web; of the prophecy of my caterpillar; of the suggestiveness of my tortoise; of the energetic motherliness of my hen. And yet, as I think of that barefoot boy, with his innocent Junetide face, torn shirt, ripped trousers, and noble confidence, I know that I have reached the highest note struck from the harp of nature. Moreover, all the men who have lived and died were once boys. Are we not tempted to forget this fact? That philosopher was a boy long before he went to dwell in Platoland. That composer was a boy before he moved into the realm of Beethoven melodies. That architect was a boy before he lifted himself and St. Peter's into heights of fame. That teacher was a boy before he laid the shaping hand of Horace Mann upon the educational world. That preacher was a boy, hunting rabbits and watching bluebirds in the fields of Litchfield, long before Henry Ward Beecher came to

sway the multitudes. That biologist was a boy before Charles Darwin gave to mankind the great concept that evolution is God's way of doing things. I like not this far fame of the men which makes us forget their childhood. For childhood is the one point between the eternities in which human life is free of responsibility. It is the breathing time, ordained of God, for men and women to get a good start up the Hills of Destiny. Therefore, it is the period in which society should be most vitally concerned. The world of to-morrow is being made by the childhood of to-day. And no generation, it is safe to predict, ever had harder problems to solve than will the one now in its barefoot stage.

Furthermore, did not my Little Seer of the Hills lay the heart of the matter wide open when he said: "I'm going to trust you, anyway"? Go where you will, trust is the secret of the growing soul. Look where you please, the need of trust shall greet you. Trust makes society possible, and trust alone. Your railroads, your commerce, your banks, your courts, your schools, your homes, your churches—all are possible only through trust. Cut the artery of trust and society bleeds to death. Is it any wonder, then, that trust plays so large a part in religion? Why, when men and women wisely learn to trust the God and Father of our Lord and Savior, as they too often blindly and unwisely trust each other, they will open such channels of power from the fountains of heaven to the heart of mankind, that wars shall cease, disease shall be banished, hatreds shall die, injustice shall disappear, while righteousness, brotherhood, mercy, and truth shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks to thee, O Little Pilgrim of the Hills and Merchantman of the Blackberry Fields! Good Mother

Earth, as I spoke to her by the way, taught me much, but thou hast been the wisest teacher of all. Thy manly voice is a true accent of the Voice Divine and Eternal: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he *trusteth* in Thee."

How does the rivulet find its way?
How does the floweret know its day
And open its cup to catch the ray?

I see the germ to the sunlight reach,
And the nestling knows the old bird's speech.
I do not know who is there to teach.

I see the hare through the thicket glide,
And the stars through the trackless spaces ride.
I do not see who is there to guide.

He is eyes for all, who is eyes for the mole,
See motion goes to the rightful goal.
O God! I can trust for the human soul.

THE UNPURCHASABLES

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.—Acts iii. 5, 6.

It is a thrilling moment in the lives of both the beggar and Peter. One has already seen the universe with new eyes. Yesterday Peter's soul-faculties were afflicted with a lameness as dire as the beggar's lifelong physical infirmity. But to-day things are changed; the world wears a new face; men are no longer an incoherent mob, but each individual stands forth clothed in divinely glistering raiment. The reason for this changed complexion of things is due, of course, to a radical change in Peter himself. Christ has crossed his path; Christ has arrested this impetuous man; Christ has touched him to spiritual fineness, and the celestial strain is vigorously at work; Christ has at last enthroned Himself in the deepmost centers of Simon's being. And Simon is vanishing like fog before the onrushing light of noonday, while Peter is rising like the sun when dawn tinges the east with gray and says: "This is but a ripple of silver from oceanfuls of splendor and of day." For Simon has lost his night and fog in the light and clarity of the Christian morning. Even as the earth-man has crumbled the rock-man has risen, uncrumbling and sublime, in place of that unstable, wind-driven human dust. That tenth-

hour prophecy, rich as the golden afternoon when it was spoken, has come true: "Jesus looked upon him and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter)." Thus Christ makes a man of dust into a soul of diamond!

But the lame man was entirely ignorant of the reincarnated Saviors coming his way. All men looked alike to him. Why not? Coming into the world a cripple, all his life long he had been a dependent; necessity made him a beggar and despair made him an unresponsive outcast. Viewing the world from a pallet of straw, and eking out a precarious existence through the grace of alms, is it any wonder that no morning ever broke its heart of gold over the Jerusalem hills for him? One upon another the long, dreary days trod through his soul with iron feet, trampling life and hope and the world itself into a confused jargon of shrieking anarchy.

But if ours is a world in which such things are possible, it is also a world in which undreamed wonders, unimagined beauties, unguessed goodnesses, unmeasured riches are constantly surprising us. Ask any man to open the doors of his soul and let you peep in, and some of the richest treasures therein seemingly dropped out of the nowhere—unexpected, undeserved, unexplained. God's great gifts come to us as silently as the twilight, even though they hue the heart with the glory of sunset. Here are questions men might ask with profit: How did the blessing of my life-work come to me? Why did I pick up a certain book at a certain time? Why did God's vestal gift named a pure woman cross my heart's threshold on such a day and hour? How did my noblest friendship begin? What

were the circumstances under which I received overtures from the unseen God, then and there took the vows of nobler living, or else had ever after been guilty of sinning greatly?

Were we not lame enough indeed when these radiant evangels of eternity came our way? And like this pauper, perhaps we turned our hungry, pleading eyes upon them, expecting to receive something—some material gift. Then did God's unannounced angel lift the trumpet to his lips and blow forth these resonant words: "Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee."

We are to consider, then, some of life's unpurchasable values, the things which cannot be had for silver and gold, but which are God's free gifts to men. For it is always true, as Mrs. Browning said, that God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

I

Mastery of circumstances, power over environment —this is one of the ageless necessities of men. It is all so trite, I know, but it is so desperately true. The paradoxical old saw reminds us that we constantly need to learn the things we have known longest. And to preside over the setting of his life with Christlike and spiritual kingliness is one of the things man always needs to learn, though he knows it with a kind of theoretical perfection. The philosophy of the subject is stated in the words of Emerson: "Though we travel the world over in search of the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not."

In other words, beauty is not found in things but in souls; happiness is not found in material environ-

ment, paltry or splendid, but in the power of the personality that rises above it, that secretes a quality of everlastingness from the reality upon which things lean. The surroundings of the lame man before the beautiful gate of the temple were, in a pure external sense, all that any man could ask. The majesty and beauty of the temple were indescribable. Outstretched wings of beaten splendor sheltered him. All that genius, silver and gold could do had contrived for this man's misery a setting of superlative grandeur. The massive clouds of twisted gold and shimmering bronze under which he lay were rich enough to drench his soul with showers and gospels of beauty. But the fact is, he was a beggar; he was a lame beggar; he was a lame beggar carried by kind hands and placed where he might receive alms from temple worshipers. Now he might have gazed upon that mountain of gold until doomsday, and had not God's lightnings of health and vigor smitten him through, he would have remained just a lame and impotent man in the very heart of loveliness and pomp.

Evidently, here is a first-century fact with a twentieth-century meaning; or, rather, it is a truth which lies behind all centuries. Men have always cried: "Give us a new set of circumstances, changed conditions, a different environment, and all will be well." And some men sincerely believe that such is the case. "Give us comfortable houses, good wages, abundant food, ease and culture, and we will be content," they say. Now, we all know that there is vast room for improvement in each of these directions; and every Christian man rejoices that conditions are being bettered. They ought to be bettered; it is a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty that men's social and

physical surroundings are not more congenial, more healthful, and more conducive to happiness. Yet any man on speaking terms with human nature, or who has even a shallow knowledge of history, knows that such a doctrine scarcely scratches the surface of the deep problems of humanity. And it is because a large, if not indeed the largest, camp of socialists throughout the world have taken for their creed the materialistic motto, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," that a great company of thoughtful persons, though in hearty sympathy with some of the reforms it proposes to accomplish, utterly refuse to ally themselves with the movement, either in its political or social phases. Any "ism" that promises only better houses and lands—essential as they are—but nothing more, has preëmpted the death of its soul to fatten its body, and both alike are ultimately doomed to starvation.

No; take our lame, bleeding, aching, wonderful humanity and set it down in the midst of palaces, art, science, philosophy, beauty, and it will be a bedraggled beggar still. "Such an argument is false," interrupted a socialist in a Chicago mass-meeting for men. "You say that sin is the root-trouble with men. It is not true. Give men a living wage, better houses for their children, opportunities for an education, and you will have infinitely better men. It is not sin, but social inequality that is wrong with the world." "My friend," replied the Christian minister, who was addressing the meeting, "men ought to have better wages, better houses, and better opportunities educationally. But I still maintain that my proposition is true—deliberate, willful, persistent sin against God and themselves is the root-wrong with men. You say that possessing

things will make infinitely better men. Let me give a concrete illustration showing the falseness of your attitude. There are in Chicago many, many millionaires. They have art; they have culture; they have palaces; they have leisure; they have everything that wealth can give. But that a majority of them are distinguished for saintliness, or are the infinitely better men which you say are produced by wealth and culture, not even the most deluded materialistic socialist could show by investigating their private and public life, man by man."

The rightness of the minister is self-evident. If men are unredeemed, without God and without hope in the world, their unmedicated spiritual pang will make them writhe in agonies of despair. On the contrary, if they receive the impregnating, overshadowing power of the Highest into their hungry souls, their passionate cry for the eternal will be satisfied by the living God. Then do palaces become more palatial because new souls live within them; then do cottages have roofs as ample as the stars because their owners have real estate more durable than worlds; and even garrets and dungeons do flame, as they have ever done when Christ indwelt men's souls, like hills of ruby smitten by many suns!

The simple truth is, the Christian God answers men's prayers for better things—and surely He has given men all things richly to enjoy—by giving them power to make cleaner, better souls. Men know they are no better because of mere things; does God know less than man in these high matters? Surely not! God knows what Christ-begotten men are capable of, and has furnished innumerable examples. Paul lay on the floor of his dungeon and wrote letters beautiful and strong

and lustrous enough to have been dictated in the drawing-rooms of sundown. But within Paul's dungeon was Paul's Christ. John stood on a lonely island and saw visions of a city so fair that its walls and gates and streets blazed like jeweled masonry. But on John's lonely island was John's Christ.

Wordsworth confessed that there was something in the madness of William Blake that interested him more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott. Somewhere in an unmarked grave, Blake's dust mingles with that of seven others. But, like Goethe, Blake did not allow a grave to impose upon him. Living in a poor cottage, he wrote: "Heaven opens here; on all sides her golden gates; her windows are not obscured by vapors; voices of the celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard and their forms more distinctly seen; and my cottage is also a shadow of their houses." It was this man whose body lies in a pauper's grave who clearly grasped the principle of the spiritual interpretation of nature in art, through the power of the imagination penetrating to its hidden meaning. He said: "I assert for myself that I do not behold the outward creation, and that to me it is hindrance and not action. 'What,' it will be questioned, 'when the sun rises do you not see a round disc of fire, somewhat like a guinea?' Oh, no! no! I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. I question not my corporal eye any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, and not with it." One might be disposed to take issue with some of Blake's canons of art and poetic theories, but not many would question his right to the Master's beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

Now, it is the vision of God in Christ that lends man power over his unfriendly environment. Because this is true, Tolstoi's five conditions of happiness are woefully lacking. To be happy, he said, we must keep unbroken the link between man and nature; we must have intellectual and physical labor; third, the family; fourth, sympathetic and unrestricted intercourse with all classes of men; and the fifth condition of happiness he names bodily health. To say the least, the category does not do justice to that great and good man. What are nature, and work, and the family, and society, and bodily health to the man who is not in vital communion with the source of them all—the holy, loving, empowering God? A wise old ancient rings out his bitter answer for multitudes. He made great works; builded houses; planted vineyards, gardens and parks; made pools of water; bought men-servants and maid-servants; had great possessions; gathered silver and gold; hired men-singers and women-singers. "So I was great," he says, "and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me." And then follows the biting, stinging, withering, vinegar-and-acid confession: "So I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me; for all is vanity and a striving after wind." Here, then, is the stark result of a godless soul and a godless civilization—hatred of life! "My daughter is a very unhappy woman"—I wrote the words down in my memory as they came from lips of anguish. "She has everything that heart could wish; husband, children, friends, gowns, automobiles; yet she is most unhappy." Knowing the daughter, I asked inwardly: "Does she really have all that the heart wishes, yea, longs for—God, Christ, the Comforter, and the life of sacrificial

service issuing therefrom?" God, and history, and souls agree in this: A life without godliness is an essentially perverted life, and real happiness refuses to come to terms with godless men and women. On the other hand, the divinely imparted mastery turns man's physical unsightliness into beauty, his things into helpful instruments, because his soul-deadness has been quickened into quivering, palpitant, spiritual vitality. For—

> As man listens, one by one
> Life's utmost splendors blaze more nigh;
> Less inaccessible the sun,
> Less alien grows the sky.
> For thou art native to the spheres,
> And in the courts of heaven art free,
> And carriest in thy temporal ears,
> News from eternity.

II

Unquestionably, one of the profoundest needs of today is a definite faith. We moderns might well imitate Peter, and that first disciple band, in this matter. Asked for a roadside beggar's gift, Peter said to the lame man: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." The ghost of indefiniteness fairly haunts twentieth century Christians, and we fear the white monster so much that we are glad to make terms with it. Folk are surprisingly eager to tell and to be told that the true lifewalk may be enjoyed in sundry names and "isms." Eddyism, Russellism, New Thoughtism, Occultism are only a few of a whole brood of cackling bantams professing to have been hatched in the nest of truth. It is indeed the day of the fakir, and he is industriously deceiving large sections of mankind. To

laugh him down by quoting Barnum's aphorism, which he held to be especially applicable to the American people, is to smile at a tragedy too deep for tears. Nor is it meeting the issue to say that such cults carry within themselves the seeds of self-destruction and that they soon pass into nethermost oblivion.

But there is a real solution to the problem, and it is this: Let every Christian exercise such a clear, definite, specific faith in the power of our Lord to impart eternal life to men here and now; to fill them with joy that triumphs over all sorrows; to speak forgiveness and peace to sinful, troubled souls; to bring hope to the despairful and strength to the burden-wearied; to unveil the richness and vitality of another world as far superior to this as the mind of God is to the mind of man; to hold every soul responsible in eternity for its life in time, and such a faith will work like a contagion —a contagion of Christian health, and hope, and joy, and victory. One man with a definite faith in Christ can chase a thousand with an indefinite guess that sprawls out over the universe, thinner than the mist and moonshine composing its microscopically invisible backbone. Much of our Christianity is afflicted with a kind of spinal meningitis. Its mental therapeutics is excellent; but it is so lame religiously as to require the assistance of patent crutches, gayly made to order in the imposing shops of nostrum-venders.

"It is not our duty to-day," says Eucken, "to fight for a new religion; we have but to kindle into freshness of life the fathomless depths of Christianity." What a challenge! What a truth! What a task! Analyze the philosopher's statement, and what have we? Three momentous facts: *First,* Christianity means freshness of life. When put to the test, it has always meant just

that. Again and again men and nations have fallen on gray days; days of the canker, the worm, the sere and yellow leaf; days when noon was blacker than midnight and multitudes went stumbling headlong into unlit gulfs of despair; days when men cursed God and died like beasts that perish. And lo! this chaos has yielded to the Christian harmony; this aching void has been filled with vast meanings; this winter of men's discontent has felt the shine of God's glowing sun from behind cloud-veiled immensities; this blistering desert has been carpeted with laughing flowers; these lonely mountains, covered with bleak, bare and massive oaks, have slipped their dead oaken giants into suits of tuneful greenness; this unfertile valley has answered the far-off and near-at-hand vernal pressures with efflorescent bloomings. And what was it but the Christocentric tidal freshness of life billowing in upon our human shores from the unemptying oceans of God?

> O listen, Men, how all the builders sing!
> O sap, O song, O green world blossoming!
> White as the hand of Moses blooms the thorn,
> Sweet as the breath of Jesus comes the spring.

Second, Christianity contains fathomless depths. Times without number the New Testament wells of truth have seemingly been stopped. The Abrahams of faith have all apparently vanished into the silent land, while Philistines, ancient and modern, have filled the wells digged by the faithful with earth, ofttimes very coarse intellectual, scientific, and unbelieving earth at that. But, fortunately, the Abrahams have invariably left behind the Isaacs who dig again the wells of water. And in the new digging new and fathomless depths are revealed. I heard Josef Hoff-

man, in rendering their music, evoke such strains from his piano that the spirits of Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin seemed to come back from the eternal world, take unto themselves bodies wrought of delirious rhythms and thunderous melodies and walk straight into the music-room of three thousand souls. And the old masters of the Christian faith, bowing before the one Master of life and death and the realms beyond, come back in answer to the call of each new epoch. They send the might of their conquering faith thrilling and singing through the souls of all good soldiers, as they charge on and up the crimson steeps beyond which ten thousand times ten thousand are garbed in the woven splendor of Heaven's sundawn! For this is the quality of that religion which Fichte describes as elevating man "above time as such, above the transient and the perishable and puts him in immediate possession of eternity."

Third, with Christianity's freshness of life and fathomless depths, any new religion, compounded of Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism, Eddyism, or any other "ism," is not only inadequate, but utterly puerile and outworn—clouds that hold no water, broken cisterns that would quickly empty if water should be turned into them. Christianity is the ocean; cults are the mud-colored, bickering streams that rush into it and are swallowed up. Christianity is the sun; cults are the tapers that are blown out by one whiff of the wind of reality. Christianity is the Great Physician; cults are the penurious quacks that get their practice from the hopelessly inane. Christianity is life—fresh, fathomless, eternal life. With startling vividness Christ describes the mission of cults and his own: "The thief cometh not, but that he may

steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

Abundant life, then, is Christ's own conception of His mission. "In vain," says Bergson, "we force the living into this or that one of our molds. All the molds crack. They are too narrow, above all too rigid, for what we try to put into them. Our reason, so sure of itself among things inert, feels ill at ease on this new ground. It would be difficult to cite a biological discovery due to pure reasoning." If the philosopher had undertaken an exposition of Christ's great life-statement, he could not have done better than in these words. For just because of its freshness of life and fathomless depths, Christianity is always cracking man-made molds. And while the cracking process is on, the cults ply their trade. Bringing their small cups of theory and dipping up tiny bits of the overflowing water, they tincture it with large doses of nonsense, and then go hawking it through the streets with the effrontery of the thief who comes but to steal, and kill, and destroy.

Meantime, it is the privilege and duty of Christians to exercise a definite faith in Christ. He controls the entire human field. His are the centuries, the worlds, the universe. In a reminiscent mood the gifted mother of the Rossettis said: "I always had a passion for intellect, and my wish was that my husband should be distinguished for intellect, and my children too. I have had my wish, and I now wish that there were a little less intellect in the family so as to allow for a little more common sense." And is it too much to say, in these shifting days when men, if not over-intellectualized are certainly under-spiritualized, that the Jerusalem which is above and the mother of us all,

devoutly wishes that her earthly children may have the saving grace of that glorified common sense which is of the inmost essence of Christianity? Fixing our faith-illumined eyes upon the lame souls all about us, let us, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, show them how to walk in the midst of the years by the strength of the timeless, very definitely emphasizing that there is no other name under heaven or beyond it whereby men may be saved. For in that name is the One who whispers to humanity's listening heart:

I am the Christ of the land of rain,
The Christ of the falling, falling showers;
I call the ancient spring to life again,
And the land of graves is the land of flowers.

I am the Christ of the running stream,
That escapes from the winter and laughs and sings,
Of the broken heart, and the ruined dream,
And all forgotten, forsaken things.

I am the Christ of the rising moon,
And the setting sun, and the falling star:
I am the Christ of Life's deep rune,
And the Country where the lost faces are.

THE TEMPLE OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION [1]

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.—Zech. iv. 6.

TAKEN as a whole, the text and context disclose the angel's approach to the prophet and the prophet's response to the angel. Without undertaking to interpret the fact of angels and the method of their communicating with men, the self-revelation of Zechariah throughout the colloquy is most instructive. First of all, we see him as an awakened man. "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." To be awakened out of physical sleep is a profound mystery. Were it not so familiar to us, the wonder of it all would smite us with awe. Yet to wake up a spiritually dead man is more wonderful still, belonging to that unfathomable realm lying beyond the borders of sense. A second viewpoint shows Zechariah not only as wide awake, but as seeing. "Behold I have seen." When a man can truthfully say that, he is beginning to match his mind with the heart of reality. The trouble with most people is that they muddle through life without seeing anything of abiding worth. Oh, yes! They see the stars sometimes, but they cannot very well avoid this celestial jewelry. They look at the morning

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and evening sky now and then, but how can they help it? Here was a man who could see things and something else—even the Eternal Fact behind them. But being awake and capable of vision, the soul is an insistent plier of questions. "What are these, my lord?" Religion does not chloroform men; it stabs them "broad awake" in every part of their being. Religion stands us tip-toe on the peaks of wonder as we ask: "What are these, my Father—these worlds and nations and confusions and agonies and joys and hopes and fears?" Still another glimpse, and we have the prophet in the rôle of listener. I think this is one of man's supreme achievements. The great listener is superior to the great talker, because truly great talking is possible only through truly great listening. At last this awakened, seeing, questioning man is able to hear. Hence the text, expressing one of the sublimest truths that ever challenged the ears of mankind: "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

I

With this background of twenty-five centuries, let us consider the task before the modern world. Like Zerubbabel, we also have our "great mountain." It is not to rebuild some physical temple destroyed by the shock of war. No; the work is far deeper and greater, more radical, more difficult than that. It is ours to build the temple of Christian civilization. The arduousness of the work will be manifest if we consider a few of the rooms which the temple must contain.

There is, first of all, the Room of Christian Politics.

To mention such a possibility provokes laughter and cynicism in some quarters. "Christian politics!" you exclaim. "Why, man, you are beside yourself. Think of Russia; think of Germany; think of China; think of Japan; think of Italy and France and England and America! Think of Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco! Think of these facts, and then how dare you mention the idea of Christian politics in the same breath?" I know something of the mingled feelings of derision and despair that prompt such words. If you are an American, and not a mere partisan; moreover, if you are much more than an American —that is, if you are a Christian American, you have thought very seriously in these years immediately following the Armistice of the sinister political forces operating in our own country. They have been in every political party and in no political party—profiteers, spoilsmen, partisans, ward heelers, Socialists, Democrats, Republicans, yellow journals, clerical mountebanks—verily all tongues and creeds and nationalities have contributed to the whole seething, confusing, hate-inspired, godless business. Is it not a blacker chapter than the period of reconstruction following our Civil War? At a time when America should have continued to play the noble part she played in the World War; and at a time, also, when we were entitled to one of the greatest debates in the history of nations—a straightforward, nonpartisan, high-minded discussion of issues involving the future of America and the whole world—what happened? We were treated to the spectacle of a personal, partisan, political brawl. Some were crying: "Back to the Constitution!" Others were shouting: "Up with Roosevelt! Down with Wilson!" Others were playing Ire-

land against England, while others were and are still playing Germany against France, England, America, and the rest of the world. "In politics," said Bismarck, "there is no room for either hatred or love." In other words, the science of politics is a kind of unprincipled national and social protoplasm containing all the germs of villainy and death. That is what politics signifies to many. There are others, however, who believe that politics can be Christianized; they believe that politics must be Christianized, or civilization itself will go down before shrapnel and poisoned gas.

A second room in this unbuilt temple must be named Christian Industrialism. Here, again, we apparently confront the impossible. Capital and Labor are the gigantic wrestlers in the arena of modern life. Ours is the mechanical age. Man-power has been so multiplied by the engineer that machinery has been characterized as "the Iron Man in International Politics." But this Iron Man has two managers: he cannot get on with one; he is so strong, so many-sided, dominating so many activities, that he demands two managers instead of one. They are Capital and Labor. They are the two arms, the two eyes, the two ears, the two feet of this industrial giant. So far, his managers have not been able to control him. And make no mistake, this Iron Man is difficult to handle. Everywhere his steps are heard. He walks through the bank, the factory, the mine, the store, the farm, the armies, the navies, the church, the school, the home. For some reason, the Industrial Samson refuses to obey his managers —Capital and Labor. Year by year he seems to grow more savage, staggering through the world in a kind of blind fury, at times actually pulling the pillars of the temple of law and order down upon himself and

others. Surely, both managers, working together, can control the Iron Man. But as yet they have not learned how. One says, "I will hold his right hand," while the other replies, "I will *not* hold his left." Or one says, "I will chain his left foot," while the other answers, "I will *not* chain his right." Meantime, the Iron Man goes on striking and kicking, growing more violent and unmanageable every day. Watching him in his fury, his managers are asking: "Well, what are we to do next?" Now, it is easy enough to take sides; make charges and counter-charges; to agitate and to insist upon "pitiless publicity." Let us confess that these are all necessary and help us get at the root of the trouble. *But having reached the root, have we any remedy for the wrongs in the root?* That is what I want to know, and what, by the grace of God, I do know. There is enough healing power in the Golden Rule, applied by the Spirit of Christ, to heal all the industrial wounds in the world. When men become wise enough to bring in the medicine they have systematically thrown out the window, then—and not till then—will this nervously sick patient named Capital and Labor be cured of his ills.

Another room is Christian Education. Let no one imagine, in this new world epoch, that he is fitted for living by a course in the arts and sciences. He may know all the literatures, and speak all the languages, and understand the methods of all the laboratories, and be familiar with all the political economies, and in the end be nothing more than a modern Mephistopheles—a sneering, jeering, efficient, inhuman monster, deadly with the delight of destruction and diabolical with the doom of death. Behind all education for this new time, we must emphasize, as never before, the meaning and

ends of education. Why are men and women to be redeemed from ignorance to knowledge? What is the purpose of high school, college, and university? Is it simply to make thinkers, and nothing more? Is it that modern people shall learn how to pick the pockets of Mother Nature more scientifically? When we think of the appalling ignorance in the world, and in our own country, it seems like a waste of breath to ask such questions. And yet, have we not seen enough of the capable miseducated modern man to make us absolutely certain that another generation of such abortive work spells unspeakable disaster?

Now, just because God created man to think, to will, and to love, Jesus Christ alone so coördinates our human powers that we are made safe for ourselves, for others, and for God. Thus, while we proceed in our work to humanize and to Americanize, let us increasingly Christianize. We must have Christian education, which is the Spirit of Christ in every individual, social, national, and international relationship. We must surely have this or just as surely have the alternative —ruin and destruction on such a scale that no thoughtful mind can contemplate it without dismay. "Learn of Me"—that is Christ's diploma to the vitally educated human. If the cynic or atheist replies that this is vague and impracticable, my answer is: When men have tried Christ's way as zealously as they have applied the methods of the militarist, the politician, the profiteer, and the godless scientist, it will be time enough to cry failure! "It has always been a race between education and catastrophe," says Mr. Wells in what has been termed the most comprehensive sentence in his "Outline of History." But to-day it is plainly a race between Christian education and the

other kind; and the other kind guarantees disaster on a world-scale.

Still another room is Christian Internationalism. I need hardly say that this is not synonymous with bolshevism, syndicalism, socialism, anarchism, or any one of a dozen "isms" that might be mentioned. Christian internationalism is the Spirit of Christ in nation dealing with nation; it is the passion of Christian individualism expressing itself through whole peoples; it is the conviction that the same law of righteousness holding between man and man likewise holds between nation and nation. "Until you get rid of the idea that business is the exploitation of somebody or something," says one of the greatest of statesmen, "you will not have come even to the frame of mind which makes progress possible." Is it not also true that until nations get rid of the idea that secret diplomacy and national rivalries, culminating in war, are not the way out of our planetary wrongs, that they cannot reach that frame of mind which makes national greatness possible? I am not among those who feel alike toward all nations. To me America is nearer and dearer than any other nation could possibly be. The fact is, I haven't much respect for the person who says that he loves one country just as much as another. He probably means that he loves none and hates all. Yet loving America as I do, I would rather see America die for the right than live for the wrong; for in dying for the right, if need be, I know that America would live forevermore; while in living for the wrong, America would be certain to die in undying ignominy. This is God's inviolable law for nations as well as for individuals. Stars may rot in their courses, but God's law of justice cannot be repealed—not even by God Him-

self, for then He would cease to be God. It was this law of which Senator Thomas Corwin spoke in 1847. In his indictment of America in her relations with Mexico, he cited numerous examples in history in which the law of retribution is executed toward nations. After showing that the Great Avenger drove the "eagles" of France, under Napoleon, back "to their old eyrie, between the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees," he said: "So it shall be with yours. You may carry them to the loftiest peaks of the Cordilleras, they may wave with insolent triumph in the halls of the Montezumas, the armed men of Mexico may quail before them, but the weakest hand in Mexico, uplifted in prayer to the God of Justice, may call down against you a Power in the presence of which the iron hearts of your warriors shall be turned into ashes."

Nor must we overlook the room consecrated to Christian Journalism. One of the most tremendous forces in the modern world is, of course, the printing press. Like every great power, the press is capable of evil as well as good. Books inspiring and books insidious may issue from the same pile of complicated machinery. Or, to change the figure, indecent literature may wind itself like a slimy serpent about the soul of a nation. The more outwardly subtle and attractive it is, the more deadly may be its folds and fangs. Just here is the terrific problem of the moving picture. Compellingly attractive, it is likewise immeasurably effective for weal or woe. If they keep on emphasizing their vile features, the moving picture interests will compel the State to protect its childhood against them. And the protection will not take the form of an ineffectual censorship; it will be so drastic

as to cut into the sensitive but as yet unresponsive financial nerve of the screen business.

But the particular form of publicity I now have in mind is journalism. Do we realize what an octopus the twentieth century newspaper is? Do not we believe so heartily in the liberty of the press that we are somewhat blind to the license of the press? One does not have to accept the whole of Upton Sinclair's indictment of newspapers to still retain a definite impression of something positively sinister in large sections of the newspaper world. Grateful for the high-minded journalists, are we alive to the menace of the other brand? Some of them are obtrusively "yellow"; others are "yellow" without being obtrusively so; and the latter are the most dangerous of all. Respectable iniquity is to be feared more than flagrant iniquity. And why? Because of its very subtlety, because of the insidious and insinuating manner whereby it sends its thrust home. You can kill a mad-dog with a bullet; but no bullet can destroy the invisible microörganism. Yet while the mad-dog slays one the microörganism slays thousands. It is even so of the influence of the semi-respectable newspaper as compared with the sensational sheet run for selfish purposes. Some publishers cannot read the signs of the times because their eyes are blinded by dollars and dimes; the counting room is too near the editorial chair; the circulation department and the public welfare are miles apart.

Meantime, who can measure the power for right and wrong our newspapers wield? There are a few really great independent papers in the world. But in thinking of the average metropolitan daily, I am invariably reminded of a Joseph's coat-of-many-colors —with no Joseph inside the coat; or, varying the

metaphor, I am reminded of the voice of Jacob, the hand of Esau, and the silver of Judas Iscariot. To put it in a word, most newspapers certainly "yawp" too much for the standing room they *do not* pay for.

But there is another type of journalism for which too much cannot be said. I mean that large number of denominational and undenominational Christian weeklies. They are the salt of our journalistic earth. Most of them are published at financial loss; a few with perhaps a slender margin of profit. Let this be said to our shame! Without the inspiring tides of idealism constantly poured into the world's life by our Christian editors, we should suffer untold loss in our politics, schools, homes, and churches. They are solvents of civilization. They clear the atmosphere. They lift discussions out of partisan muck up to the prophetic mountains. I think every man who reads his partisan daily—Republican, Democratic, Socialistic—would greatly profit by seriously reading some one of the fine and definitely Christian weeklies. They are an antidote to rabid nationalism; they are an offset to violent partisanship: they foster an atmosphere of brotherhood and world-vision.

II

If these are some of the rooms to be built in the temple of Christian civilization, how are we to approach our task? If the question is crucial, the answer is even more so. The text contains three answers. Two are wrong, but one is right.

There is, first, the answer of the voice named "might." "We must reckon with humanity as it is," says this voice. "Man is merely the highest animal

we know; he will never be amenable to anything but physical power; therefore, the best temple man may hope to build upon earth is by might." Strangely enough, the modern voice and the voice in my text are identical. For this word "might," according to scholars, is packed with varied meanings. First it signifies army, force, that which is brought about only through physical coercion. A second meaning is wealth, the bribing, buying power of money. "Just wave the golden wand over human hearts; money talks; people can ultimately understand no other language; use it abundantly, and all will be well." A third meaning of "might" is valor—the vast energies of heart and will represented by a Cæsar or a Napoleon. Perhaps our nearest modern synonyms are "kultur" and "efficiency."

There is a second voice. It says the temple must be built by "power." In a broad sense, we are told that "power" here denotes capacity, cleverness, diplomacy. Is it not significant that the word here translated power is also translated by two other words in the Old Testament? Once it is rendered "lizard." Did you ever lean upon the handle of your hoe and watch a rusty lizard run along an old rail fence in corn-growing time? Well, it is a picture never to be forgotten by a boy brought up on the old-fashioned farm. Creeping along the rail, the lizard stops ever and anon and "lifts and listens." It is a flesh-and-blood exhibition of stealth. Still another translation of the word power is "chameleon." This is most suggestive indeed, because we are at once inducted into the realm of politics. There are some fifty-nine species of the chameleon, which is perhaps something near the number of political species extant in this and other lands

to-day. More pertinent still, the chameleon possesses the extraordinary power of changing its color to suit its immediate environment. Politically speaking, it denotes adaptability, smartness, sharpness—in a word, that quick-change type of character so familiar in the world of diplomacy. Is not the dress of many a so-called statesman of the chameleon style? A father and his son were in the visitors' gallery of the United States Senate. "Father," inquired the boy, "who is that old gentleman that's praying?" "He is the chaplain." "Does he pray for the Senators, father?" "No, my son," answered the father, after a moment's reflection. "When he comes in and looks around and sees the Senators sitting there, he prays for the country."

Fortunately, there is a third voice. It says: "The temple of Christian civilization cannot be built by might nor power; it must be built by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Suppose we approach this truth along two paths. Negatively, it thrusts us far beyond an impersonal universe. And to break through these huge walls of matter is a task of the first magniture, is it not? For man has a definite setting in the cosmos. He is related to stars, atoms, corpuscles, atmosphere, electricity, ether—indeed to all those forms of universal energy called magnetic, radiant, kinetic, molecular, and gravitational. On his physical side, also, man is akin to the vegetable, protozoic, and metazoic eras and mammalian kingdoms. Yet think! Before there was a universe, there was the Holy One that inhabiteth eternity; before there was an electron or a world, there was God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Before there was even the promise of man upon the earth, there was God, and, therefore, when our solar system has become a sunless ice-floe

drifting through darkened seas of space, God will still be God. Behind all forms of energy, all star-clusters, all universes known and unknown, all forms of life that have come and gone or shall yet come and go, it is eternally "by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Yet, positively and in the light of Christ, all this is scarcely more than a soulless impersonalism devoid of redemptive meaning to mankind. If we believe not only in the God of Jesus, but in the Jesus of God—as Newton Clarke was wont to say—what a transfigured, personal universe is this in which we live and move and have our being! Then are we assured that Someone and not merely Somewhat has broken through the worlds of energy and matter into the souls of men. Immanent in all things, He is personal in all hearts and wills. Thus, in our Lord's going away, do we behold the wisdom of the Divine expedience. Vanishing outwardly, He becomes inwardly vital. Then do men learn to walk with majesty the great ways of being, because He dwells within them. Other teachers have left their own scholars to interpret them to after ages. When Socrates died, Plato and Aristotle caught up the Socratic torch and passed it forward to waiting hands. Jesus the Christ, on the contrary, left only one Teacher, the Holy Spirit of God. Disciples He left—Peter and John and James; but they and all the millions since, are learners of Christ, taught, if at all truly, by the Holy Spirit. Jesus purposely left no successor in the form of apostle, prophet, priest, or pope. There would be multitudes of servants and witnesses and martyrs; but there would be only one Teacher, one Comforter, one Guide. "I have yet many things to say unto you," He said in the Upper Room and still says, "but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of

of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and declare it unto you."

III

Consider, finally, the encouragement in the third voice for our task. Primarily, we are made to realize that God is more interested in His world-wide work than all men together can possibly be. This is no apology for human laziness. We cannot shirk our part; we have, as men and women, something to do that we must do. We are workers together with God; and the work is urgent, imperative, destiny-fraught. At the same time, is it not heartening to know that there is One Who runs and does not weary; that while generations appear and vanish, the Infinite Toiler works on forever. We work according to timepieces named youth, middle age, and decline. Quickly enough the hands of our physical clocks come to a fateful pause. But God's timepiece is Eternity; the ages and milleniums are only minutes skipping over the face of His dial-plate. "Where we were," says Peary, recalling his discovery of the North Pole, "one day and one night constituted a year, a hundred such days and nights constituted a century." Once only in thousands of years does one man reach a place of vantage on the earth where days are as years and years are as centuries. But God is not straitened by relations of Space or Time. Spatially speaking, God is everywhere, and "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." I think it was a high

moment in the life of Zerubbabel and his fellow workers when Zechariah recovered this truth for them. Their undertaking was so immense; their resources were so slender; at last they were so tired and weary as to be on the verge of collapse. Then comes the prophet's vision of the olive trees, on either side of the candlestick, close to the golden spouts, "*that empty the golden oil out of themselves.*" Important as it is, human agency may be dispensed with. We modern people do not think so, and from some viewpoints it is not well that we should. Most of us are altogether too willing to let God do it all. Nevertheless, for confused minds and frayed nerves, for creatures of a day with tasks big enough for time and eternity, there is a mighty encouragement in knowing that God is more profoundly concerned in the renovation and completion of the world and the universe than all the intelligences within them. God buries the generations, but His regenerations go unceasingly on forever and ever.

A second lesson is this: God is always using "might" and "power" in the realization of His purposes. Here is one of the strange facts in the history of nations and individuals. Sometimes a whole society apparently takes the wrong path. Selfish, brutal, non-Christian, denying its own well-being, a State does that which is evil in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of man. Nobody would dare condone its action. And yet, is not history itself witness to the truth that nations in their rise and fall, even by their "might" and "power," have been made to consummate the larger purposes of God for mankind. It is this thought at the back of his mind which causes the thinker's reflection on the Hohenzollern dynasty. Behold these blustering militarists as the avowed masters of the

world! But in the day of reckoning, they are like so many puppets fastened to the end of an unbreakable string and made to dance to a tune they never expected to hear. This is not the highest kind of sovereignty, to be sure; that is, it is not the paternal or Christian type, such as Christ's revelation of the Divine Fatherhood implies. Yet it is a fact, none the less. Nations and individuals may go squarely against right and mercy and brotherhood; while breaking God's Heart they will break their own; but even in the misuse of their "might" and "power" the Almighty Spirit employs them in the attainment of far-off ends. Sending themselves into bondage, they shall not come out of their self-wrought imprisonment until they have paid the last farthing of moral obligation and righteous endeavor. Hence it comes that honesty is not simply the best policy; honesty is imperative and ultimately absolute, because the universe is governed by an honest God Who cannot furnish a hiding-place for one dishonest soul.

The third lesson is: Small ventures for God and man are of irresistible majesty and power. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" Why, nobody but the mentally blind and the wickedly weak and the morally stupid! The day of small things is none other than the day of God. The big, noisy days are of man; but the quiet, untrumpeted, despicably small days are of God. Was it not in a day of small things that God was enfleshed; that the Church was born; that the Reformation was conceived; that America was discovered? We now speak of these as great epochs and creative eras. Certainly! It is much easier to see backward than forward, or than to look around even now and distinguish anything Divine afoot in the

world! Yet the Invisible Sower is this very hour striding through the furrows of mankind. Silently He sows, silently His harvest grows. God's best seeds are prophets and teachers and dreamers and servants and martyrs. Like the grains of wheat, except these also fall into the ground and die, they abide by themselves alone—*alone!*—and, therefore, unprolific. But death, being the servant of life, releases their deathless energies and they become one with the undying. "I shall have more to say when I am dead"—this is the watchword of those who toil through the day of small things. And why? Not, surely, because of small things or large things! But, rather, because of "the Eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout all the earth." Here are Eyes big enough for the world, for the universe. Here are Eyes that can discern what ought to be done, and then find a way to do it. Here are Eyes that can see beyond national boundaries, social circles, intellectual cliques, capitalistic schemes, bolshevik class consciousness, religious exclusiveness. Here are Eyes that laid the foundations of the universe not on galaxies but on electrons; that see not only huge constellations but invisible atomic systems; that understand how all large things grow out of small things—from universes to nations, from nations to individuals; that know the cosmos itself is compelled to bear witness to the moral certitude that "many shall be last that are first, and first that are last." So, as the workmen go about their task, they chant the music of their building-song:

> Happy he whose inward ear
> Angel comfortings can hear
> O'er the rabble's laughter;
> And, while hatred's faggots burn,

Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set,
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead,
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!

THE CHRISTIAN'S EUREKA

And hereby know we that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.—I. John ii. 3.

St. John was an expert in spiritual science. He was a master of the forces which operate in the spiritual realm. The secret of his spiritual mastery lay in his profound God-consciousness. A great modern saint has said: "To believe in God means something fiery and glowing." And John, the beloved, was a first century fulfillment of this august ideal. There was something fiery, something glowing, in his belief in God. As we read his words now, that inwoven fire of his heart, begotten by the infolding power of the Holy Spirit, flashes out in unconsuming flame. His consciousness of God was more real than the physical universe. The world might drop from under him. Stars might be snuffed out like candles. Suns might be blown out like matches. Yet one somehow feels that John would still get on magnificently.

Of course, he received superior training in the school of God-consciousness. For did not his head rest upon the pulsing bosom of humanized Deity? Did not his ear, as Hugo says, hear the beating of God's heart? Did not his hand feel the grasp of enfleshed Godhead? Did not his eyes behold how the Eternal looked as He peered through human windows? Surely, John had most excellent training in the final reality of God-vividness. John Henry Newman was converted at fif-

teen. Many years afterwards he wrote: "Of inward conversion I am still more certain than that I have hands and feet." Just multiply this a thousandfold. Then will you begin to approach the awful, divine certainty of inward conversion as manifested by the son of Zebedee.

Now, one of the imperial facts of the Christian consciousness, according to John, is this: Every man may know that he knows God. Does it make us wince? Does it make us stagger? It ought not. It ought to fill us with a majestic feeling of bigness. It ought to break upon us a sense of unrealized spiritual spaciousness. It ought to make us cry out like a man smothering to death. It ought to make us shout like a man on a desert island to a passing ship. It ought to make us ashamed to sit still upon our piles of golden dirt. Let us face John's colossal fact.

I

Knowing that we know God is a personally progressive process. "And hereby we know that we know Him." Or, better still, I think, and more in tune with the original: "And herein we come to know that we know Him." Or, let us make it first person, singular, and the idea will be driven home: "And herein I come to know that I know Him."

Assuredly, we must make full allowance for all primary and instantaneous manifestations of God to the soul. Christian history fairly bristles with them. They fit into the Christian firmament as the stars fit into the sky. The man who denies them is either a fool, or a knave, or both. Spiritual revolutions, whole civilizations have come to birth in the epochal hour

of sudden individual conversion. Witness St. Paul. Witness St. Augustine. Witness untold millions, living and dead, who, in some tumultuous, crucial moment have realized the dawning of spiritual self-consciousness, through Christ Jesus. But just now we are to remember that John is not writing to unchristian people. He is writing to "my little children." He is writing to those of whom he says: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." These are the people to whom he seems to say: "Knowing that we know God is a personally progressive process. And herein we come to know that we know Him."

Well, what does John mean? I think the truth is inexpressibly sublime. He means just this: Every soul must know God for itself. No other soul can know God for my soul. No other soul can know God for your soul. Every other created spirit in the universe may know God. Yet am I compelled to know Him for myself, and not another. Compelled? Yes! But O, what a glorious compulsion it is! How it swings the soul out into the spaces of spiritual freedom! How it thrills one with a sense of his spiritual birthright! "But it is so hard," you say. "I have tried it." Perhaps that is just the trouble, my friend. *You* have tried it. *You* have insisted upon doing it all yourself. Suppose you give God a chance. Suppose you subdue that will long enough to push it up alongside the will of God. Suppose, in a word, you surrender your life to God. Mayhap you are too active, too strenuous, too noisy. Suppose you practice genuine meditation for a little. You will not find it an easy thing to do. Liddon defined meditation as putting oneself down before a truth and waiting to see what that truth says

to you. Suppose, then, you become wisely still before God. Then pray, in Christ's holy name, that God's own stillness may steal into your soul. For Eucken is right in saying that the spiritual task is beset by enormous complexities. But "in particular, the danger lest spiritual work should be subordinated to the power of the merely human." And the merely human, divorced from the positively divine, always results in the inner emptiness, the invisible anarchy.

No, my friend, knowing that you know God is not hard, if you go about it in the right way. But it is absolutely impossible if you go about it in the wrong way. You might as well try to reach the North Pole by ascending to the top of your chimney, as to really and savingly know God, other than by the truth as it is in Christ. "I am *the* truth!" How peremptorily, how majestically, how Godlike it rings out! Some philosophers talk about truth as if it were a sky-rocket shot into the night. Away up in the air somewhere an explosion occurs. Then myriad, fiery globes of dazzling colors coruscate and gleam and sparkle. Then the globes dwindle into dots of fading flame. Then the vanishing dots of fading flame vanish into nothingness. And the face of night is as black as ever. Well, Christ is not that kind of truth. He is not a philosophic sky-rocket. He does not shoot a ray of light into the brain and say: "Brain, be brilliant." He does not drop a luminous spark into the will and say: "Will, be obedient." He does not thrust a candle into the soul and say: "Soul, be light." No: there is no such fractional fragmentariness in our Lord. He lights up the whole man. He illuminates the entire human organism. Instead of setting a bright light in the window of one faculty, that it may signal to a pale light in the

window of another faculty, He pours Himself—the Life, the Light, the Truth—into the hidden center of human nature. From that center radiates the light which makes luminous the whole man—the body, the soul, the spirit.

Why, Christ Christianizes the soul as the sun atmospheres the earth with summer. How does the sun bring summer to our world? By painting the daisy white and golden and forgetting to dye the rose cream and crimson? By making the corn green and forgetting to green the "emerald meadows"? By striking song through the robin's throat and forgetting to pour music through the cardinal's voice? By unfolding the peach blossom and forgetting to congeal the oak's sap into an acorn? By ripening the strawberry and forgetting to ripen the apple? By renewing the face of nature and forgetting to renew the face of man? Ah, no! That is not the way the sun brings summer to our dear old earth. Somehow he blows his warm breath in behind everything. Then there is a stir in every seed. Then there is a throb in every plant. Then there is a pulse in every tree. Then there is a warble in every bird. Then there is a glow in every face. Everything seems to whisper: "I am in the summer time. I am in the summer zone. I am in the summer atmosphere. I am in the summer world. I am drinking brimming goblets of summer shine. The sun hath wooed and won me. I am all radiant in the richness of his life and love." So is it with Christ and the soul. When He comes, the complete man begins to pulse and glow. Dead faculties begin to bud and blossom. Decayed areas of being begin to sprout. Waste places begin to leap and sing with joy and hope. Unrealized capacities are flooded with thought. The whole man moves forward—in-

ward, outward, upward, Godward. For the Christian is a vast sunshine recorder, because he is abidingly sunshining in the eternal summerliness.

Does it still seem hard and strange? Let me ask you: Is it hard and strange to let the light-waves beat in upon your eyes? For untold centuries they have been on their way to meet your eye. Now, when those light-waves arrive from far off worlds, is it hard for your eye to enter them in, that you may behold the face of your friend? Well, on the night before He died, our Lord said: "Let not your hearts be troubled. When I have died to redeem mankind; when I have laid down my life and taken it again; when I have ascended back into yonder heavens out of which I came; when I have been glorified, I will not leave you comfortless. I will not leave you sunless. I will not leave you lightless. I will send you another Comforter. I will be as light-waves to your souls."

II

That every soul may know God, is one of the fundamental concepts of Christianity. The Master taught it with insistent and unbroken emphasis. It is a truth with which the writings of St. John overflow. He states it now in one form, now in another, but always with clear-cut definiteness. Knowing that we know God is one of John's rock-ribbed affirmations. In one great passage he gives both the fact and the method of such knowledge. "And herein we come to know that we know Him"—there is the mighty fact, a personally progressive process, if you please. Then he states the law, the conditions of all effectual knowledge of God. It is this: "If we keep His commandments."

"But it is so hard to attain this definite knowledge," I hear some one say. "The process is so very difficult." Ah! the trouble, then, is with the process? But after all, is this personally progressive process of knowing that we know God, so hard? Now, it seems to me that I myself am a much harder proposition than the process. It seems to me that I am much more unwilling to have the process vitally and continuously operative in my spirit, than is the loving Father God willing and waiting to make it so. Yet St. John knows that herein is life, love, and peace. That is just why, I take it, he lays down this essential condition of spiritual knowledge: "If we keep His commandments." There is both an internal and external significance in that pregnant phrase "to keep." It suggests a thoroughgoing aliveness of the soul to God. It cannot be comprehended by ritual and ceremonial. For Christianity is not a system of religious mechanics. It is rather a spiritual movement in abounding vitalities. And John is insisting, through Gospel and Epistle, that knowledge of God is conditional upon hearty, whole-souled obedience.

In particular, his guns are turned upon the fortress of Gnosticism. Mere intellectual enlightenment is the thing John is bombarding. This is one of the deadly enemies we need to drive from his false citadel to-day. Principal Forsyth began his great address before the Congregational Union at Sheffield, England, in these words: "I have often said that Christianity is at this moment (all unknown to most Christians) passing through a graver crisis than any it has encountered since the Gnosticism of the second century provoked a mortal conflict which turned Christianity into the Catholic Church. The Church won then. But what is

all our Christian effort worth if the decision go against us now?"

For Gnosticism, whether in the Church or out of it, whether in the pulpit or the philosopher's chair, is always prouder of its cut-and-dried intellectualism than of its Christian spirituality. Naturally, but not altogether paradoxically, it fights like a Turk, when confronted with this accusation. That is, it fights with pneumatic words for weapons. Still, it is hardly a question of inflated words, I think. It is a question of tragic fact. It is a question of chilled religious conditions. It is a question of an unspiritual atmosphere which men breathe. Uproariously insisting that wisdom began and will therefore perish with them, they are little other than galvanized corpses parading as Christianized bipeds. Of course they get nowhere. They chew over frayed and worn theories, some thousands of years old. Then one day, after their intellectual cud is quite hard and dry, they suddenly blow these petrified theories forth upon the world. Then, with their wisdom-goggles cocked at the proper angle, they wait for a religious revolution. They portend a cataclysmic intellectual upheaval. But when both fail to materialize, then our modern Gnostics forthwith explain what their propaganda does *not* mean.

Now, John affirms, there is no vitalized and vitalizing Christianity apart from obedience to God, as revealed in Christ. Even Aristotle insisted that in morals knowledge divorced from practice is worthless. The Greek's virtuous man has to perform virtuous acts. "First, knowingly; secondly, from deliberate preference, and deliberate preference for the sake of acts (and not any advantages resulting from them); and, thirdly,

with firm and unvarying purpose." Still, Aristotle's virtuous man is not so tall, from his shoulders upwards, as St. John's Christianized man. Aristotle's man may serve any of the warring gods of Olympus, which one is a matter of small moment. John's man must obey the God of Christ Jesus. Every Christian has the privilege of proving that he knows God. But there is only one method of making his hypothesis burn with the white heat of Christian reality. It is to keep, inwardly and outwardly, His commandments.

Moreover, while the apostle is a startlingly original thinker, yet this truth of knowing that we know God did not originate with him. I think I can tell almost the very day that its germ fell into John's heart. He is not the wise old man who writes this letter. No! It is away back in his springtime. His nature is just beginning to feel the divine ploughshare. The Good Husbandman is only commencing to tread the furrows of his being. The good seed is being sown for the first time in the rich, responsive soil of his soul. Ah! yes, it is away down the stream of years we have to go—even from John the Aged to John the Younger. The heavenly songsters are only awaking to song in his heart. For him the buds of the Tree of Life are just beginning to unroll. I think it was upon a feast day in old Jerusalem. Then and there did this ripened truth of his age begin to stir in John's soul. The Jews are hard upon his Master's track. He is shunted into Galilee, then back again into Judea. Like a pack of ravenous wolves, they are bent on having His blood. Even His brethren taunted Him. Even His brethren carped at Him. Nevertheless, in the midst of the feast Jesus went into the temple and taught. The Jews marveled and said: "How knoweth this man letters, having

never learned?" His answer came clear as the noonday. It is still vibrant like the golden tones of a cathedral bell, ringing through life's morning, noontide, and sundown. "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." And young St. John heard these deathless words. Their meaning shot into his inmost soul. Now old St. John is writing down once again the words upon which young St. John first began to live. "And herein we come to know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."

This truth was never more keenly and comprehensively phrased than by Robertson of Brighton. Appointed chaplain to the sheriff in 1852, he preached at the assizes, which were held at Lewes. Taking for his text John, vii. 17, he delivered his masterful sermon on "Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge." Stopford Brooke, his biographer, says:

"It was curious, I have been told, to watch the pew set apart for the judges—Mr. Justice Coleridge and Mr. Baron Parke. Its occupants, on the conclusion of the 'afternoon service,' expecting nothing to disturb their intellect, settled themselves into decent postures, full of ease, for their customary reverie. But before three minutes of the sermon had passed by, their attention was riveted, their position changed, and they listened with evident interest to a discourse of forty minutes in length. The conclusion of the first sermon was remembered well: 'From the trial-hour of Christ —from the cross of the Son of God—there arises the principle, to which His life bore witness, that the first lesson of Christian life is this—be true; and the second this—be true; and the third this—be true.'"

So, let us learn it once and forever: Obedience is the key, obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. There is, because there can be, no other. An old axiom runs: "Obey the law of a force, and the force will obey you." Obey the law of atoms, and atoms will obey you. Obey the law of electrons, and electrons will obey you. Obey the law of gravitation, and gravitation will obey you. Obey the law of light, and light will obey you. "So far, so good!" you say. But let us go on: Obey the law of spiritual knowledge, and spiritual knowledge will obey you. Why do we become suddenly and emphatically unscientific just here? Why do men become masters of atoms, electrons, and microbes, and are yet naïvely content to leave uninvaded this definite realm of spiritual truth, this enriching zone of rewarding reality? Surely they must be afflicted with a blindness which the penetrating power of radium fails to search out. They must have a dimness of vision which the brilliance of electricity cannot expel. They must have a cold, icelike, inner deadness, which the warmth of no culture can resuscitate. Wherefore, we must seek the warm, wooing, glowing light of Him who is the light of the world. "There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. *But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Thy Kingdom come.—Luke xi. 2.

We are sometimes reminded that the petitions in the Lord's Prayer are paralleled in the Talmud. Consequently, the former lacks originality. As a matter of fact, there is a striking resemblance in several of the petitions, if not in the entire seven. Nevertheless, the view that the Great Prayer is therefore on the same level with Talmudic and other writings is not well sustained. I have heard that the test of originality is not in saying a thing first, but in saying it best. A deeper expression of the truth, it seems to me, is not either saying a thing first or best, but in saying it with the accent of finality. The originality of Jesus, then, is not merely a matter of words or even of thoughts. His supremacy in these is unquestionable. Yet there is a backlying matter of profounder import. It is the Master's personality, His character, His being. What He was and is constitutes the uniqueness of our Lord. Therefore, whatever He touches takes unto itself a new distinction. It is because they are stamped with His own personality that these seven petitions have superlative worth. They may have been repeated a million times before; but the moment they were taken up into Christ's thought and voiced by His lips, a new epoch in the evolution and history of prayer was ushered in.

The petition which forms my text expresses one of the great and familiar ideas of Christianity. Men's

thoughts have always centered in the Kingdom of God. They have looked and prayed and worked for it the ages through; they will continue looking and praying and working for it until it comes in all its Christian reality. My purpose at present is to lay what I think a needed emphasis upon the Kingdom in its *wholeness.* When one considers the eternity and grandeur of the thought, what foolish words have I spoken! For "there is recognized," says a qualified student, "in Scripture—Old Testament and New Testament alike—a natural and universal kingdom or dominion of God, embracing all objects, persons, and events, all doings of individuals and nations, all operations and changes of nature and history, absolutely without exception, which is the basis on which a higher kind of kingdom—a moral and spiritual kingdom—is to be built." Is it because of its vastness that we are tempted to think so fragmentarily of the Higher Kingdom? It may be so. On the other hand, our fragmentariness in this matter may be due to the fact that we are developing fragmentary habits of thought and life.

I

Consider, first, the origin of the Kingdom of God. It did not originate with history or even time itself. Undoubtedly the Kingdom, or Realm of God, has a history in time. Yet we sometimes forget, in our narrow and parochial outlooks, that the Kingdom of God is older than history, older than the ages. We must date its beginning with God—and God never had a beginning! I am putting the matter in this way because most of us need the scourge of eternal whips. We hearken so much to the humming of the tiny tem-

poral bees forever drumming their ditties at our ears that we need to hear the booming surge of billows rolling in from the deeps of infinite seas. Now one of these billows, surely, is in the origin of the Kingdom of God. Before there was a universe, or a world, or a man, the Everlasting Kingdom was born in the mind and heart of Godhead. Yet do not most of us treat this imperial truth as if it were a kind of after-thought thrust into time and history?

Take the earth and the universe as an illustration of this larger concept of the Kingdom. Our planet is quite old, authorities say many millions of years. Also, from certain viewpoints, the earth is very large. But in comparison with the universe the earth is neither old nor large. Speaking after the manner of men, there are worlds so much older and larger than ours that they are as a grayhead to an infant, as a mountain to a midget. In other words, the universe did not begin to be with the birth of our world out of the firemist. Nor did the Kingdom of God begin with time, or history, or the Bible. It is as much older and greater than these as the universe is older and greater than the comparatively youthful planet on which we live. For the Kingdom of God is primarily of the heavens and the eternities. No seer *first* foresaw it; no prophet *first* foretold it; no poet *first* visualized it. It began *first* in the Heart of God; it is the irruption of Godhead into humanity and history.

Now, why dwell upon this highly speculative truth in our emphatically practical day? For two reasons. First, the only way to be truly practical is to be truly spiritual. We know that men are spirits; but men see so much of each other in their bodily forms that they are tempted to think overmuch of the physical rather

than the spiritual nature of human beings. Yet, in the last analysis, we manifest our wisest and deepest concerns for the physical environment of humankind in so far as we truly appreciate their spiritual backgrounds. Why are we so tremendously interested in the physical well-being of our brothers to-day? Just because we are growing a profounder conception of brotherhood. But brotherhood is essentially spiritual; and the spiritual is not measured in terms of centuries or nations or communities; it is not old or young or little or large; it is godlike—"the breath of God in timeless things." Human brotherhood, a spiritual reality, is bottomed upon the Fatherhood of God, and the Realm of God is rooted in His Fatherhood. Does not this send us straight to the origin of the Kingdom? And are not the coastal regions of our human frontiers so much in review that a glimpse of our spiritual hinterlands proves bracing and wholesome?

A second reason for dwelling upon the origin of the Kingdom is this: The big, creative souls are jealous lest their circumference should split off from and lose contact with their center. I find this definite centrality in prophets and seers, ancient and modern. "Thine, O Lord," says David, "is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all." Not less loftily does Isaiah speak: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished." Here are minds that have crossed

the near frontiers of being to dwell in the far yet real hinterlands. And why? Because, to keep the circumference of their being true, they were compelled to keep their centrality deep.

Turning from the ancients to the moderns, we hear Immanuel Kant saying: "Man is a member of a kingdom of ends." Yet a kingdom of ends is included in the Kingdom of God, which Hort defines as "the world of invisible laws by which God is ruling and blessing His creatures." These invisible laws are a world within a world, "a cosmos within a cosmos; they come direct from Heaven or from God." Witness, also, the words of Josiah Royce: "Dogmatically, then, I state what, indeed, if there were time, I ought to expound and defend on purely rational grounds. God and His world are one. And this unity is not a dead natural fact. It is the unity of a conscious life, in which, in the course of infinite time, a Divine plan, an endlessly complex and yet definitely spiritual idea, gets expressed in the lives of countless finite beings and yet with the unity of a single universal life." I have quoted, as you see, from these prophets and seers almost at random; but remember that there is nothing random or aimless in the course of their thought. It flows, as Lotze might say, with "the unity of an onward marching melody," because it trickles down from fountains high up among the Everlasting Hills.

II

Originating in Heaven or with God, the Kingdom has a history. Just here the sublime Genesis Hymn of Creation is of first importance. Very noble indeed is this high and august major music which has been too

often rendered to the mechanical accompaniment of literalistic minors. Genesis was not written to give us a science, but to give us a God. And in that far-off beginning we see the faint outlines of the Kingdom of God in its unfolding historic continuity. It begins with the creation of the earth, comprising its various orders and epochs to the birth of Man. Think of the countless cycles God had to toil in making the earth before it could be inhabited by Man! Then, after man's coming, something went wrong. Account for it as we may, explain it scientifically, psychologically, philosophically, or theologically, the fact is something *went wrong!* All through the centuries men have described that wrongness by one tremendously big little ugly word—*sin.* Try as we may, the word, or more important still, the fact behind the word, will not rub out. It has stained the soul of humanity even as the bloody drops stained the hands of Lady Macbeth. Even Dr. James Martineau, liberal though he was, is profoundly orthodox on this point. "For myself," he says, "I can never sit at the feet of Jesus, and yield up a reverential heart to His great lessons, without casting myself on the persuasion that God and evil are everlasting foes; that never and for no end did He create it; that His will is utterly against it, nor ever touches it but with annihilating force. Any other view appears to be injurious to the characteristic sentiments, and at variance with the distinguishing genius of Christian morality."

Yet, notwithstanding man's tragic mischoice, the Kingdom of God comes on apace. "The Giant With the Wounded Heel" goes limping down the years. But as he limps along he listens and hears the promise of ultimate victory: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he

shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Thus, through the passing ages, we see the developing purpose of God handed steadily forward. On it goes through patriarchial, Mosaic, priestly, kingly, and prophetic stages. Like a subterranean river, it flows through Seth to Shem, through Shem to Terah's family, narrowing at last to a single member of that family in the person of Abraham; then through Abraham to the Mosaic theocracy; then on to the Judges and the monarchy. With the failure of the monarchy and the education gained through the exile, the thought begins to dawn upon certain souls that God has His own King. "By Divine revelation," says Riehm, "ideas were planted in the minds of the people of Israel, so lofty, and rich, and deep, that in the existing religious condition they could never see their perfect realization; ideas which, with every step in the development of the religious life and knowledge, only more fully disclosed their own depth and fullness, and to look to the future for their fulfillment." Gradually the world-deep lesson is learned that the God of Israel is also the God of all peoples. Indeed, there are few more instructive chapters in history than God's use of the particular and the universal. He is, in a special sense, the God of Israel; but He is the God of Israel only that He may better teach that, in a universal sense, He is the God of the whole earth. And while this special education of Israel is going on, God is being sought and found of men everywhere; for "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation He that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him."

With the advent of Jesus the Christ, there begins, of course, a new epoch in the realization of the Kingdom of God. "The one fact which stands out clear," says

one of our accredited modern authorities, "is that in the time of our Lord neither Pharisee, nor Sadducee, nor Essene, had any hold of a conception of the Kingdom which answered to the deep, spiritual, vital import of the idea in the Old Testament." So Jesus not only recovered the High Aim of God from misunderstanding and falsehood; there is in Him a distinct advance, historically speaking, over any conception which had preceded Him. Since the Incarnation, have not men, however imperfectly, been trying to grasp our Lord's sublime vision of the Kingdom? But in our time Christians, I verily believe, are in the throes of this eternal dynamic as never before in history. Therefore, I ask this question: *Do we not require a proper emphasis and focus of the Kingdom in its wholeness?* Thinking of the eccentricity of gifted human beings, a wise man said, with a note of despair: Of what use is genius if its focus be a little too short or a little too long? Synthetic thinking upon this great subject will assuredly help to relieve us of the antinomies, antitheses, and even antipathies so often connected with it. Suppose we attempt, however inadequately, to grasp the two aspects of the one truth with our spiritual and mental fingers.

1. *The Kingdom of God is Individual and Social.* It is not individual alone nor is it social alone; it is both at once and the same time. It seems very difficult for many to give a just balance to the two facts. We either divorce them altogether, becoming frankly individualistic or emphatically socialistic; or else we join them with such thin, insufficient thought-mortar that they refuse to make a solid wall in the building of God. To-day we are convinced, for example, that the overemphasis of individualism in the past was a serious

mistake. Its error is manifest in religion, in philosophy, in education, in commerce, and in politics. Now by way of contrast, the present is socialistic; that is, the social forces of mankind are operating on a scale unequaled in the past. What, then, is the danger of the present as set over against the past? Just this: That we have swung to the other extreme and insist upon the social without a due appreciation of the individual. "I am sure," to quote Royce again, "that whatever is vital in Christianity concerns in fact the relation of the real individual human person to the real God." In the nature of the case, vast mass movements tend to obscure this truth.

Nevertheless, the Kingdom of God is individual and social. In the order of its development, it comes into the individual before it comes into the community. "We cannot attempt to achieve the Kingdom of Heaven politically," says A. Clutton Brock, "until it is, to each one of us, a fact of our own experience, the pattern which we see and according to which we would exercise the common will." Paradoxical as it may seem, Christianity is a wholesale business proceeding upon the retail fashion. Though a part of the society of all souls, every soul must prove God for itself. All men are rooted in God, as Plato thought, yet each man turns on the faucet which supplies the particular sap flowing into and making his own individual roots vigorous, healthful, and a strong support to the social tree. Yet why should there be a false emphasis at all? The universe, the world, and civilization are every moment illustrating the individual and social phases of being itself. Why, then, these unnecessary contrariants of thought and action in dealing with the Kingdom of God? Consider two simple and human illustrations.

In northern New York I saw a French Canadian boy, who is a victim of infantile paralysis. Born and brought up in a cabin, he drags his crippled body about, while his companions run the hilarious ways of a happy childhood. But a Christian man took the boy in hand and began pouring upon him showers of loving care. He was placed in school and taught to operate a typewriter. Not yet can his twisted fingers grasp pen or pencil; nevertheless I have a poem composed and typewritten by that sorely handicapped lad; for already his soul is bursting into spiritual bloom. Once another lad ran away from his palace into the city slums. He was a prince, dressed in a velvet suit. Approaching a ragged boy near his own age, he began talking with him. "Why do you wear such dirty clothes?" he asked. "Doesn't your nurse buy you new stockings when you get a hole at the knee? If you're hungry, why don't you eat your dinner instead of munching that crust?" "We are poor," the ragged child answered simply. It was the first time the child of the palace knew that there were children of poverty. When he was found and taken back home, the prince said to his father: "When I grow up, I am going to help the poor children of Belgium to become more prosperous." And he kept his word. For that runaway prince became Albert, King of the Belgians. "But," you ask, "what have these two boys to do with the Kingdom of God?" Much—very much indeed! In the case of the French Canadian boy, the Kingdom of God is individual; it is in the heart of the Christian man rescuing the child as well as in the child himself. In the case of Albert, the Kingdom of God is social; it is symbolized in the head of a modern State, as well as in the soul of that heroic people, struggling for the liberties of the world. Wher-

ever righteousness is enthroned—industrially, politically, morally—the Kingdom of God is individual and social. To think of either without the other is to think misleadingly.

2. *The Kingdom of God is Present and Future.* Here, again, there is demand for spiritual perspective. "The Kingdom of God is within you, or in your midst," said Jesus. Present and humanized within the soul, wherever the King is, there the Kingdom is also. But in the Master's thought the Kingdom has a future as well as a present tense. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

Why not, therefore, in the interests of truth—which is more important than even the most diversified emphases of truth—give these ideas their legitimate setting and articulation in our thinking and doing? For wherever the human heart is in tune with the desire of God, the Kingdom is present. "I was made a red hot salvationist by an infidel lecturer," confessed William Booth. "That lecturer said, 'If I believed what some of you Christians believe, I would never rest day nor night telling men about it.' " Where are the red hot souls to-day? Well, wherever they are the fires of the Kingdom are burning. Would that there were more of them, radiating their purifying heats into the Church, business, and society. Are not kindled souls among God's best methods of starting the fires of righteousness that burn up the chaff in politics and nations? "John Wesley's place in history," says Woodrow Wil-

son, "is the place of the evangelist who is also a master of affairs. The evangelization of the world will always be the road to fame and power, but only to those who take it seeking, not these things, but the Kingdom of God; and if the evangelist be what John Wesley was, a man poised in spirit, deeply conversant with the natures of his fellow-men, studious of the truth, sober to think, prompt and yet not rash to act, apt to speak without excitement and yet with a keen power of conviction, he can do for another age what John Wesley did for the eighteenth century. His age was singular in its need, as he was singular in his gifts and power. The eighteenth century cried out for deliverance and light, and God had prepared this man to show again the might and the blessing of His salvation."

Present in the Christianized personality, the Kingdom is also future. It has come, it is coming, it will keep on coming, until "the kingdoms of the world are become the Kingdom of our Lord, and His Christ." Little by little, nations are being compelled to acknowledge the wisdom and necessity of Christ's way. We are learning that there is a law above all man-made laws. Speaking of slavery, Seward said: "Congress has no power to inhibit any duty commanded by God on Mount Sinai or by His Son on the Mount of Olives." Another statesman, with a world-vision and a passion for justice among all peoples, appeals to the future of the ever-coming Kingdom as he hurls himself into the present battle for individual and social righteousness. "Trust your guides," he says, "imperfect as they are, and some day, when we are all dead, men will come and point at the distant upland with a great shout of joy and triumph and thank God that there were men who undertook to lead in the struggle. What difference

does it make if we ourselves do not reach the uplands? We have given our lives to the enterprise. The world is made happier and humankind better because we have lived."

3. *The Kingdom of God is Visible and Invisible.* In a special sense is it visible in the organized and universal Church. With all of its shortcomings, the Christian Church has stood for the nearest approach to the Master's ideal of any institution in history. Indeed, was it not founded for this very purpose? And all through the ages the blood of the martyrs has not only been the seed of the Church, but that crimson rain has watered the quickened roots of civilization itself. Visible in the Church, yet the Kingdom is as invisible as thought. "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking," says Paul, "but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Were nobler words ever inspired by a more seemingly commonplace, if not ignoble, situation? The little Christian community in Rome was perturbed over a question of diet. Was it right to eat meat or forego it? To observe certain days rather than others? Then, as now, there was a kind of conspiracy to overload the soul with "emphatic trifles." Paul hangs the subject out on the golden line of Christian privilege and lets the airs of Heaven blow through it. Yes, he says, it is one's privilege to eat meat if he wants to. But, he argues, the Kingdom of God introduces the soul to higher rights than mere personal privileges. *A man has the right not to do anything that will injure a human being.* Men are not greatly Christian by everlastingly clamoring for their rights. Men have the right not to take their rights. Possessed by the Spirit of Christ, these have made the great venture from outward advantage to inward renunciation,

wherein life, properly speaking, according to the seer, can only be said to begin. Thus, while the Realm of God is rendered visible by every church building, every school house, and every institution fostering the liberties of mankind, it is at the same time gloriously invisible—as intangible as thought, as universal as air, as still and deep as the everliving purpose of God.

Here, then, are a few implications of that lofty petition, "Thy Kingdom come." Originating with the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Kingdom has invaded the highways and byways of history. It *has* come—it *is* coming—it *will* come! Let this be our watchword as we face the tasks of the new time. Let us cultivate a large perspective rather than a limited outlook. Let us keep the Christian focus, laboring to set every stone of truth in the rising temple of universal righteousness. As it took a golden reed to measure the Holy City, so it takes a golden mind to evaluate the Kingdom of God. More beautiful than all precious stones, its walls are higher than all heavens and deeper than all seas; its gates are not twelve pearls, but ten thousand times ten thousand vitalities, pulsing eastward and northward and southward and westward; it has the symmetry of a living cube, for "the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal."

SPIRITUAL ENLARGEMENT

Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to them that were set down.—John vi. 11.

THERE is a sense in which a preacher of the Gospel is handicapped by the greatness, variety, and richness of the material at hand. He is like a miner suddenly come upon inexhaustible diamond mines, and yet unable to market the precious gems; like a farmer driving a lone wagon into the vast wheatfields of the West for the purpose of hauling away all the golden grain; like a child bailing out the Atlantic with its tiny bucket, or scooping up the sand along the shore with its toy spade. The Gospel is a spiritual diamond mine, an infinite wheatfield, a measureless ocean. When Jehovah set the machinery of the physical universe in motion, He knew that it would wear out; but when He revealed the Gospel as the savior and completer of the human spirit, He knew that it would wear on—wear on after the universe has worn out. Little wonder, therefore, that a preacher of the Everlasting Gospel, as he attempts to draw water from the wells of salvation, should sometimes seem to hear the voice of an Unseen Presence at his side, saying: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

Now, this sense of handicap through richness of material is not absent from the Master's miracle of feeding the five thousand. For example, one is tempted

to pause and make a sermon on the curiosity-smitten multitude; or, upon Jesus ascending the mountain, where "He sat with His disciples"; or, upon His tender compassion for the crowds as He beheld them struggling up the mountain-side; or, upon His testing of Philip, whose brain was an automatic cash-register, calculating to a nicety the financial resources at their command; or, upon the bleak pessimism of Andrew, volunteering information about the lad with his five barley loaves and two fishes, and then adding: "But what are these among so many?" or, upon the lad himself, whose basket-meeting lunch became the live wire along which the currents of the living God extended frugality into overflowing abundance, and of his return to his home on the beach that night, proudly telling his parents that he had been the hero of the occasion. Seeing that all these things are here, and fairly packed with suggestiveness, how is one to muster the courage to march straight on down to the eleventh verse before stopping? And yet, to put it briefly and bluntly, that is precisely what I have done, with the view of emphasizing a phase of the miracle which may prove worthful in its spiritual and personal applications. My theme, therefore, is: "The Secret of Spiritual Enlargement, and Its Accessories."

I

Consider, in the first place, the abiding secret of spiritual enlargement: "Jesus therefore took the loaves." It is always worth while to note the "wherefores" and "therefores" of the New Testament. They may have a rough exterior, but their heart is as soft as silk and as rich as honey. And why did Jesus "there-

fore" take the loaves? The very word throws us back upon the moral reasons demanding the miracle. Think of the men, women, children, shepherds, vinedressers, fishermen, all surging up the mountain toward Christ; think of Philip's close-fisted, hopeless calculation; think of Andrew's rank pessimism; think, in short, of five thousand hungry mouths and five loaves and two fishes with which to feed them, coupled with the despair of His own disciples, and you have just about as difficult a situation as can be imagined. But just here breaks in the light and the flame and the flash and the glory of this prosaic word, *Therefore!* Because nothing else was to be done, because nothing else could be done, because of the helplessness of the multitude and the inadequacy of the disciples' resources, "Jesus therefore took the loaves."

Now what did Jesus do? Why, He took the loaves. "The loaves," you say, "and how many loaves were there to take?" Only five—just as many as you have fingers on your hand! And, mark you, they were not loaves such as your baker leaves at your door every morning: they were five meager, coarse barley loaves, upon which the veriest pauper of to-day would soon starve to death. "And how many fish were there?" Just two—the same number of eyes that you have in your head and ears on the sides thereof! "Well, but that's a mighty small capital to commence so large a spiritual business on!" That depends entirely on who is at the head of the business. If you and I are at the head of the establishment, unquestionably it's a mighty small capital. But if the Lord God Almighty, Who sows space with worlds and souls with goodness, is backing the affair, why I can't see that spiritual business is dependent upon the capital, large or small, but

upon the Owner. When God's creative will begins to operate, it is hardly becoming in me to say whether He will, or will not, do this, that, or the other thing. The lobes of the human brain are not large enough to span the creative purposes and processes and resources of the all-wise God. So that, if on the present occasion the Son of God deemed it necesary to actually add to the sum total of things, to the storehouse of matter, and "called together from the surrounding air the elements needed for the purpose, just as in hushing the storm He met force by that will of His which is the ultimate source and ground of all force," I should not like to intimate that the task was beyond Him.

But a question of commanding and immediate importance is: What about your loaves and fishes? Not, how many or how few, but in whose keeping are they? You stand at one end of them: what is at the other end—space, force, doubt, sin, or—God? Remember: their value is not determined by their quantity, but by your getting them to God in Jesus Christ, and thereby stamping them with a spiritual quality. As I have just said, that lad with his five barley loaves and two fishes had small enough capital to begin a great spiritual business on—no doubt about it. But listen: If he had had only one crumb of one loaf, and one scale of one tail of one fish he would have succeeded, because the God of loaves and fishes was on his side.

And what is true of your individual loaves and fishes —your time, your capacity, your possessions—is not less true of the Church. At the hazard of being commonplace, I ask you: What is the Church, anyway? A man says, referring to his local organization: "We have a great church, and a great preacher, also. Why, he's a positive wonder. He can talk on anything." I

go to see this "great church," and, sure enough, there is a magnificent plant: great building, great wealth, great organ, great singing, great display. And then, as a fitting climax to this "great church," I listen to its "great preacher." It does not take long to measure him. The man was right when he said he could "talk on anything." He *can* talk on anything—but the Gospel! But, really, is it a "great church"? To be perfectly frank, is it a church at all? Is it not rather a great club, run for personal and social reasons, with a few charitable organizations tacked on? At any rate, it is not that divine bulwark against which Christ said the gates of hell should not prevail. Ah, no! The gates of lust, the gates of fashion, the gates of pride, the gates of envy, the gates of jealousy—all these iron gates of hell do prevail against this poor, tinsel, gilt, powdered, Christless thing.

What, then, is the Church? According to our Master Christ, the Church is a company of faith-intoxicated men and women, who, though living and toiling upon earth, are able to bring things to pass in the upper galaxies of the universe. Listen: "Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." Moreover, according to Christ, not only shall the Church's decisions be ratified in the courts of God, but the Church's requests, when agreed upon, shall be granted. Listen: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father Who is in Heaven." Furthermore, not only are the Church's decisions ratified in Heaven, and not only are the Church's petitions granted by the Father of our Lord

and Savior, but wherever two or three spirits are united in the name of Jesus Christ, there is the Church of the living God. Listen: "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Wherever Christ is, whether there be two, three, or ten thousand hearts, there is the Church; and where Christ is not, there is no Church—that, as I understand it, is the teaching of the New Testament.

Is it not plain, my brethren, that the secret of spiritual enlargement lies in our getting ourselves, our dear ones, our unsaved brothers, our possessions, to the Christ of God? We cannot do spiritual business without Him. We have tried it too long and failed too often. If only we yield our lives into His hand, what before stood for a pinch of poverty and a tithe of efficiency shall become the wealth of Heaven and the power of God.

II

I pass now to a consideration of the second thought suggested by my text: The accessories of spiritual enlargement. They are three—thanksgiving, distribution, multiplication. Let us take them in order.

"Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks"—let us pause, bow down, and worship just here. With Professor Dods, "one would fain have heard the words in which Jesus addressed the Father, and by which He caused all to feel how near to each was infinite resource"; but even more important than His words on this and every occasion was our Lord's attitude toward things, toward persons—in a word, toward life. And what was that attitude? It was the attitude of thanksgiving. The august reverence, the beautiful holiness, the majestic sanctities with which

Christ invested all life—these compel me, as I walk through the Gospel Gardens, to take the shoes from off my feet lest I should dash the divine dew from the petals of the roses which Christ's stainless fingers have set in the soil of the soul. Everywhere, all the time, I find, in Christ, this golden music flowing out from the central, inner harmonies of life and the universe: thanksgiving for the wayside flower, thanksgiving for the beaming sun, thanksgiving for the silver rain, thanksgiving for the homely crust, thanksgiving for the humble task, thanksgiving for the unlovely life still retaining the possibility of being touched by the power of the endless life, and thereby raised, augmented, multiplied into the life of God.

But you say: "I am a practical man. What has Christ's attitude toward life to do with me?" I answer: "The attitude which you allow Christ to sustain toward you determines your attitude toward life and the universe, also." When a thankless spirit resides at the center of a man's nature, the loaves and fishes of life are received with haughty disdain, his normal mood; but when they are cut off altogether, the same thankless spirit will utter curses as bitter as the waters of Marah. Mistake not this conclusion! A man devoid of the spirit of thanksgiving must, in the nature of things, live a narrow life at its best; but when that life arrives at its worst, believe me, his thankless spirit is turned in a blazing, blistering flame of hell to torture him.

On the other hand, if we emulate our Lord in the spirit of thankfulness, we find our souls crying aloud with Charles Kingsley: "Every creature of God is good if it be sanctified with prayer and thanksgiving! This to me is the master truth of Christianity! I cannot

make people see it, but it seems to me that it was to redeem man and the earth that Christ was made man and used the earth." And how did Christ use the earth? Always in the spirit of thanksgiving, even though the earth smote Him to the death with its cruel, brutal blows. And what is the attitude of one soul united to other souls in Jesus Christ? Let the great apostle, one of the supreme spirits in the majestic universe of souls, make answer: "For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in our faith?" With genuine pathos a dear, octogenarian pilgrim told me this story. He said he had just read, before my call, of a poor woman who came to her humble home after a hard day's work. Soon she sat down to a table upon which there was a single crust and a cup of water. Notwithstanding the direness of her poverty, she bowed her head and asked her Unseen Host in tones of gratitude: "Well, have I got all this, and—Jesus Christ?" And once again the words of the wise man came winging and singing down the centuries: "Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

The second accessory of spiritual enlargement is distribution: "And having given thanks, he distributed." Of course! That is what the Master was always doing: distributing life, distributing light, distributing health, distributing hope, distributing comfort, distributing peace, distributing joy. And this law of Christian distribution has never been repealed. It

is embedded deep down in the constitution of things. Undistributed activity or energy of any kind either diminishes or explodes. It must either attain the highest reaches of life or the lowest abodes of death. In no realm is the law more steadfast and undeviating than the spiritual. Because he belongs to the Lord of Life, the Christian is a distributing center of life. "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide."

Let me repeat it again: first and supremely, the Christian is a distributing center of life. Everything else is secondary. All other attainments count for nought in comparison. Let me see if I can make you grasp my thought. I know three men—men of international reputation. Two are Americans, one an Englishman, all are preachers. I was discussing with one of the Americans the other two. "What do you think of Dr. Jones, of Boston?" Said he: "Dr. Jones is a great philosopher. Philosophy is his passion; but Jones doesn't love men." "And what do you think of Dr. Smith, of London?" "Well, Smith is somewhat of a puzzle. His theological coat, like Joseph's, seems to be of many colors. I would say that Smith has a passion for truth, as he understands truth, but he doesn't love men." Now, the words of my friend's estimate of his fellow workers which still ring in my soul are these: "But he doesn't love men." Let no man depreciate the scholar, the philosopher, the searcher after truth: each has his place in the temple of humanity and the Church of God. But until the scholar, the philosopher, the theorist has been made over into the Lover of Men, until he has a Brain within his brain, a Heart within his heart, a Spirit within his spirit—until, in a word,

he becomes a distributing center of the life of God, he cannot invade and conquer those vast and mighty spiritual realms where, and where only, is to be found the life that is life indeed.

The third accessory of spiritual enlargement, as suggested by my text, is multiplication. And this, it seems to me, is in suggestiveness the uniquest phase of the miracle. Go back for a moment to our base of supplies—five loaves and two fishes. They are brought to Christ, blessed by Christ, distributed by Christ, and now comes the question: When were they multiplied into the abundance which satisfied the hungry thousands? Ah! it is a great lesson, an essential lesson, a lesson we need to learn better and better: those loaves and fishes were multiplied in the distribution. While the distribution was going on,—not before nor afterward,—the figures in God's multiplication table were expressing the resource of the infinities and eternities of the spiritual, and Heaven's groaning table was spread in the desert.

By way of application, in closing, let me remind you that it is just so our own loaves and fishes are multiplied. Undistributed, they will forever remain the petty, puny, miscroscopic two and five. Distributed among hungry, aching lives, they shall be multiplied by the thousands, and at last only angelic mathematicians shall be able to gather up the unwasted remainders and appraise their limitless valuations. What is it but the eternal law of the eternal Christ: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom." Have you gold? Have you brain? Have you brawn? Have you faith? Have you hope? Have you love? Get them multiplied through distri-

bution. And begin now! The heart-throbs are pounding down your bodily house; the brain cells are wearing out; the blood-vessels are being emptied, never again to overflow with their rich, red currents. But you!—you and I are hastening on to other spheres of activity. Let us leave behind those indestructible forces of influence and character through which God can move and work after we have been in Heaven beholding God's face for a thousand years. I beseech you, in the name of that Christ Who is ready to judge the quick and the dead, invest your gold in ragged bodies, invest your bread in hungry bodies, invest your love in hungry hearts, and you shall be exalted into those spiritual affinities and relationships which yield increasing satisfactions forever and ever!

THE THANKFUL HEART

For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.—II. Cor. iv. 15.

The Bible is like a melodious steeple set with thanksgiving chimes. The variations of the tune are many, the spirit, the tune itself, is one. Hearken to the music of these Scriptural bells! They ring out gloriously, and they ring out unceasingly as well. To whom shall our thanksgiving be offered? Unto God, our Heavenly Father. Through whom shall it be made? Why, through our Lord Jesus Christ. What are the reasons for thanksgiving? Well, all our gifts are from God—our temporal benefits, our daily providences, our unfailing guidance, our immortal hopes. What are some of the forms of expressing gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift? Worship, prayer, offerings, and praises. These are just a few of the thanksgiving chimes that ring in the Bible tower.

Now, the player of the chimes in our text needs no introduction. He is well known in Heaven and on earth. This old master of spiritual symphonies is never better than in his rendering of thanksgiving music. For Paul was a great thanks-giver because he was a great thanks-liver. It is this, I am sure, that gave him such a vast conception of the grace of gratitude. "For all things are for your sakes!"—think of the immensity of Christian privilege in the words!—"that the grace,

being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God"—think of the solemn responsibility of so using all things that our thanksgiving may glorify God! Surely the genius of the thankful heart is the highest quality of genius—life expressing itself in the very noblest terms.

"For all things are for your sakes!" Without attempting to compass the inclusiveness of this thanksgiving pæan, let us consider a few things which will stir the thankful heart.

I

This American country of ours should make every heart throb with gratitude to Almighty God. Think of its natural resources! Think of its boundless plains! Think of its fertile valleys! Think of its hills, mountains, streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans! Indeed, our crop reports furnish a very tangible, if quite immeasurable, illustration of the fertility of our country. One Sunday morning I walked across the Manhattan Bridge. Always interesting, this walk is never more satisfactory than in the sweet dawn of God's own holy day. The spell of October was over all—the rich-tinted leaves; the shocks of corn, those golden tabernacles of the autumntide; the robins, whose faded, tattered breasts told of their approaching flight southward to exchange their old garments for bright, fresh new ones; the melancholy expression brooding upon human faces—everywhere the October magician had left his mystic touch.

Well, I thought that dense forest of skyscrapers never looked more splendid than on that Sabbath morning from the high arched bridge. They looked

massive and high enough, too. But after seeing that picture showing what would happen to those sky-scrapers if our mammoth grain crop should be dumped in and on and up and over them, I admire the vast buildings not less, but the marvelous productiveness of our farms more. Three billion bushels of corn! What cribs can hold them? Seven hundred and fifty million bushels of wheat! What granaries can contain them? One billion four hundred million bushels of oats! What bins are large enough for them? Two hundred and forty million bushels of barley, rye, and buckwheat! Why, here is material to make pancakes for the universe! In round numbers, the plow, the harrow, the hoe, and the threshing machine have coaxed five billion five hundred million bushels of grain from American soil in a single year. It is stupendous, amazing, incalculable! Why, if the American farmer should empty his sacks upon Park Row, Broadway, and Wall Street, immediate suffocation would set in. For he would literally engulf beneath his pile of grain the Stock Exchange, the thirty-nine-story Bankers' Trust Building, the forty-one-story Singer Building, Wall Street with all its buildings, lower Broadway with all its buildings, Bowling Green, the Custom House, the Battery, the North River piers, and the docks of South Street—every single one would be actually buried from sight, if the American farmer should spill his grain treasure over this particular area of real estate!

The fact is, the output is so immense as to surpass the powers of imagination. But we ought certainly to include the fecundity of our soil among the "all things" that "are for your sakes." Moreover, we ought to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the American farmer. The whole world is his debtor. He is greater

than any ruler, or potentate, or emperor, or king, or president, or general that ever lived. The farmer gives us our wardrobe. Witness the sheep on a thousand hills! The farmer fills our meat chest. Witness the lowing herds on oceanlike plains! The farmer alone makes it possible for the great business of national housekeeping to go on. Let the farmer die, and crêpe as black as midnight would hang on America's front door. Some men may die and not be greatly missed; but let the American farmer die, and there will be a nation-wide funeral. But he is not going to die. He is going to do something far harder and grander and nobler. He is going to live, and out of his industry and toil and sacrifice this nation will witness a new birth of integrity and simplicity and devotion to the causes that make for national righteousness. All honor to this horny-handed, wind-smitten, sun-burned hero! We thank him for the soil he vexes, for the crops he raises, for the virtues that thrive in the garden of his heart, for the sons and daughters he rears, for the God he worships!

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II

A second thing for which right-thinking people are thankful is the Church of the living God, which an apostle describes as the pillar and ground of the truth. It is well, now and then, to go back to fundamental things, to discover, in the midst of a world where flux and change and decay are vigorously at work, what are the foundations of ultimate reality. In his masterful work on "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century," the author leads us back, century by century, to Plato and beyond. But the church of God goes back

beyond Plato, beyond Isaiah, beyond David, beyond Moses—back to the heart of the Eternal himself.

"My church!" God's Church, Christ's Church—no man's church, and no sect's church—that is why hell and all its myrmidons must fall back before its terrible might! Do you believe in gravity? Then this truth is as sure as gravity. Do you believe in the ebb and flow of the tides? Then the moon does not sway the tides more certainly than that the truth of Christ's words shall finally sway the hearts of men. Indeed, is it not high time Christian people throughout the world were getting a new vision of the assured triumph of the Christian Church? Again and again her altars have been forsaken; the people have perished for lack of vision; quacks of every conceivable stripe have traded upon the by-products of Christianity; multitudes have bowed before pagan gods and burned strange fire upon the altars of the Most High; but always, sooner or later, the God of Jesus Christ has shaken the foundations of false religions and true, and after the divine earthquake was over, the floors and walls and windows and towers of the Christian Church stood forth more gloriously than ever before.

Meantime, there are two essential things that Christian people should do. The first is this: They must quit apologizing for the Gospel. They must proclaim it in love and with unvarnished sincerity; and they can do this only as the power of the Gospel is allowed to create and sustain their own souls in good works. Our need to-day, my brethren, is not expert apologetics; we need original, first-hand practitioners, experiencers, if you will, of the unspeakable things of God in Christ. I mean no criticism of legitimate apologetics. I mean, rather, that we have dissected so much that the dis-

sector needs rest. He has exhausted himself. He needs a retreat, a hospital, some place where he can be quiet and visionful enough to see that this patient named the Gospel was never really sick at all, that he is the real invalid in need of spiritual convalescence. These physicians have found that they cannot heal themselves, and their only hope of salvation is in the very thing that they have been "scientifically" cutting to pieces. It is a glorious time for men who really believe in Christ to assert themselves. Away with our timid guessings! Away with our analytic questionings! Away with our joyless religion! Let us give the Gospel a chance, and be thankful to its Author that we have such a Gospel to be deeply thankful for!

We are not only to stop apologizing for the Gospel, but the Christian Church must do another thing: It must cease its unworthy competition with the world. Be assured of this—the world will never be converted to Christ by adopting worldly methods. In every age when the Church has adopted such methods, the world has invariably and heartily despised the Church. Patting the church on the back with one hand, it has thrust a hidden dagger into its inmost heart with the other. No; the world does not need, and the world will not accept, what is glibly called an up-to-date Gospel. I am frank to say that I need a dateless, eternal Gospel; and that is what every man needs, what the whole world needs, what all may have, and do have, in the fathomless Gospel of the blessed God. Now, if the genius of the world is capable of creating the content of the Gospel, then the Gospel is a misnomer; but just because "the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the thing preached to save them that believe." Never

was this more profoundly true than in our own age. For, with all our cleverness, we are no match, either in intellectual strength or philosophic subtlety, for the Greek mind to which Paul spoke. Thus, while modern Jews are asking for signs, and while modern Greeks seek after wisdom, let us, in the name of Paul's God, preach Christ crucified, though he be a stumbling block unto Jews and foolishness unto Gentiles; for unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is at once the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The thankful heart will not overlook the Christian Church. Its toil and tears and substance will be consecrated to her service. In the best and broadest and deepest sense—and I am measuring my words—no man is a good citizen, a good father, or a good patriot; no woman is a good mother, a good wife, or a good neighbor who belittles the Christian Church; and no son, no daughter is worthy of inheriting the privileges of this republic who lays profane hands of scorn and skepticism upon that Ark of the Covenant named the Church of God. Those who practice the new persecution of neglect and indifference toward the Church will one day confess: "I am not worthy to be called citizen or disciple, because I persecuted the Church of God."

III

But I must especially mention the home-makers. Of all the people who are placing heavenly mortgages upon the to-morrows of life, the Christian mothers are foremost. They shape the future for God and humanity by shaping their children according to high ideals. Our mothers are the most potent people in the world

to-day. We do not underestimate the work of the statesmen, the physicians, the ministers, the bankers, the educators, for we are all workers together; but we *cannot* overestimate the importance of the mothers. Tell me what a nation's mothers are, and I will tell you what the nation itself is. God has indeed called motherhood to awful responsibility; and the majority of mothers, I like to think, are accepting, in fine sincerity and holy joy, the significance of their call. Oh, I like, at this Thanksgiving season, to think with grateful heart of the humble women whose fame is not great on earth, but who are well known in those radiant and invisible spheres where earth's shadows are never cast. No blocks of marble do they round into statues; no canvases do they adorn with glowing colors; no books do they write with scholarly taste; no music do they compose with sweet strains; no platforms do they occupy with persuasive speech. Yet are they all these, and more, because they are God's disciples of the unexplored and the unexpressed. Sculptors, they chisel the veined marble of flesh and blood into living, breathing, human statues; artists, they paint the colors of righteousness on undying souls; authors, they write the literature of godliness on the hearts of their sons; musicians, they sing the white song of chastity into the souls of their daughters; orators, their lives speak so eloquently of the invisible things of God that, after quitting the world, they, being dead, speak on from the high places of eternity. So, to-day, we chant the beauty of these mothering lives which, like angel-watered lilies, grow close to God, and are quiet, sometimes quaint, and always queenly.

Look about you, then, and within you, and beneath you, and above you, and you will be sure to find many

things which will fit in with the liturgy of the thankful heart. We should be grateful for the heavenly hurts which leave no scars, for the celestial benedictions which drop upon us in dark disguise. Some one has said that Francis Thompson, like Lamb, was "called by sorrow and anguish and in strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God." I saw a strong man kissing the cheek of his dead old father, venerable with years and wealthy with invisible gold. Turning away, the son said, half musing: "I wonder if father is not already young again, and if he has not lost even the memory of his terrible pain." Yes, I think we go to the Land where we grow younger the longer we stay, and where, also, the younger we grow in the youth of immortality the more heavenly wise and the more soulfully healthy we become. Give your hearts to God, then! He will answer your hard questions, give you joy for sorrow, peace for pain, hope for despair, and love that knows no measure. And when life's school is out, and your lessons have been learned, you will run shouting and singing home to the outstretched arms of God, Who will solve your intricate problems, illumine your dark mysteries, and wipe away your tears. For all things are for your sakes—all true teachers, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; all wondrous schoolrooms, whether the world, or life, or death; all hopes and all experiences, whether things present, or things to come; all are yours, if you are Christ's, because Christ is God's, and nothing shall be able to separate you from his love. Ring out, then, your happy bells of gratitude, ring them clear across the world, ring them until their golden tones are heard in Heaven, and so may you cause this and all thanksgivings to abound unto the glory of God!

THE POTTER'S HOUSE

Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words.—Jer. xviii. 2.

God's sermons are always illustrated close up to life. Arguing his weakness, man stutters in abstractions, mumbles in metaphysics, darkens counsel by big words. Revealing His wisdom, God speaks through objects familiar to all. Man would analyze the beauty of the lily. But God loves the lily too much to see its beauty tarnished. Truly this is God's speech: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." Striking his brain against the clods, man says: "*How* do they grow?" Nothing can keep a worm from drilling in its native soil; placed upon a snowy marble slab, a worm would die of cleanliness. But while man is burrowing about the how, God is content to behold the growth of the lilies. God prefers to teach in objectives, because He knows the rim of man's brain is not large enough to deal in subjectives to any great extent. That is why He sent Jeremiah to school in the potter's house. There is a well-defined analogy in the house of the potter and the house of man's soul. God seems to say to the prophet: "Watch the potter work, and you will see Me work. Look at the potter's clay, for that is what I made you out of. Consider the potter's wheels, for as he puts his clay upon the wheels, so do I. Examine his marred vessels. I have them strewn all over the earth. Above all, be sure to see him remake his

marred vessels, for that is what I delight in doing." And Jeremiah had his sermon. It is one of the best he ever had because it came from the lips of God. It is worth our while, therefore, to consider what the prophet saw and heard in the house of the potter.

Pottery, as you know, is one of the most ancient of arts. There is a certain charm about it which has endeared it to all civilized nations. Many allusions to it are found in classic poetry. Homer compares the rhythm of a dance to the measured spin of the potter's wheel. With the exception of the cave-dwellers of the Drift period, the art of pottery is said to have been practiced by all known prehistoric races. Nor is this at all strange when we are told on high authority that "no process in any handicraft is more beautiful than that of a potter molding a vessel on the wheel." Little wonder, therefore, that Jeremiah forgets to scold on his trip to the potter's house. It caused him to remember that God is not a destroyer of men's lives, but that He is rather a Divine Artist touching them into shapes of imperishable beauty. No mother's cradle-song was ever sweeter than these words: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

I

I think the first thing that attracted the prophet's attention was the partially molded clay. It was not yet ready to be fashioned into some lovely shape. The hand of the potter had touched it but slightly. And that is why, as he looked, Jeremiah discovered that it was clay of an ordinary character. Authorities tell us

that the potter never sees his clay take on rich shades of silver, or red, or cream, or brown, or yellow, until after the burning. These colors come—after the burning. The clay is beautiful—after the burning. The vase is made possible—after the burning.

Does not Jeremiah's sermon come close to life? After the burning, we own a purity that sees God. After the burning, we have a wisdom that knows God. After the burning, our weakness is coined into strength and we lean upon God. After the burning, our faith is no longer a flickering flame, but an eye set in the soul through which we behold the Face of God. If the burning hurts, as it always does, it is only a prophecy of the strength which will be ushered into the life. When the little girl told her music teacher that it hurt her fingers to practice on the piano, the teacher answered: "I know it hurts them, but it strengthens them, too." Then the child packed the philosophy of the ages into her reply: "Teacher, it seems that everything which strengthens, hurts."

How wide-lying and universal is this law of life! Where did the bravest men and purest women you know get their whitened characters? Did they not get them as the clay gets its beauty—after the burning? Where did your mother get that look which, as you think, would add dignity to an angel's face? Already God has written the answer—after the burning. Where did Savonarola get his eloquence, and Stradivari his violins, and Titian his color, and Angelo his marbles, and Mozart his music, and Chatterton his poetry, and Palissy his enamel, and Jeremiah his sermon? They got them where the clay gets its glory and its shimmer —after the burning!

I have read again the life-story of Katie Powers,

who died at a home for incurables in Cleveland. When her spirit left its twisted, misshapen body, strong men told their strength in tears. Katie was a bright, happy girl, but disease did all in its power to rob life of its winsomeness for her. In the flush of young womanhood, inflammatory rheumatism left her unable to walk. But when God made this girl out of the dust of the earth, He did not forget to slip some of the dust of character-gold into her soul. Deprived of bodily power, she said: "But think how much I have left!" Then her arms stiffened, her fingers drew up like claws, and her jaw became so rigid that it would have been impossible for her to eat but for the fact that her teeth were extracted to permit the introduction of food. Her vision forsook her also, leaving only a little sight in one eye. For years she lay huddled up in an invalid's chair. She could see a little, move her arms a little, and that was all.

And what did she do? Why, she became a painter. She would lie there and paint sunny bits of water color. And the pictures revealed not the slightest hint of the sufferer in the background. They laughed with sunshine and blushed with hope. People never thought of pitying her, so they simply loved her. She carried not only her own burdens, but the burdens of others also. "Whenever I get blue," said a neighbor, "I go in and see Katie; she always cheers me up." "No life ever seemed to me so truly Christian," said one. "It makes you believe in God," said another. And when her beautiful spirit went up to receive the kiss of God, many a heart in the Forest City was draped in sorrow while the angels wreathed her "in a smile of white." The pathos and inspiration of it all is, though helpless herself, this pure, white martyr maid of pain helped

others—after the burning! Dr. Henry van Dyke has set our truth to music:

The fire of love was burning, yet so low
That in the dark we scarce could see its rays.
And in the light of perfect, placid days
Nothing but smoldering embers, dull and slow.
Vainly, for love's delight, we sought to throw
New pleasures on the pyre to make it blaze;
In life's calm and tranquil, prosperous ways
We missed the radiant heat of long ago.
Then in the night, a night of sad alarms,
Bitter with pain and black with fog of fears
That drove us, trembling, to each other's arms—
Across the gulf of darkness and salt tears,
Into life's calm the wind of sorrow came,
And fanned the fire of love to clearest flame.

II

But in his visit Jeremiah saw more than the unmolded clay—he saw the potter working at his art. "He wrought a work on the wheels." The prophet saw the unshapely clay taking form. As the potter worked, he observed that there was a definite plan for each vessel. Some were large, and some were small; some were beautiful, and some were not; some bore one color, and some another. But he noticed that in this formative, molding process there was an intelligent purpose in the mind of the potter. And as the wheels went spinning round, it was the potter's desire to get that purpose wrought into the clay.

So, also, God wants our lives to be an expression of His thought. After all, is not every creature a thought of God, and is there not a divine plan back of every life? What would you think of a potter who would hold his vessel to the wheels, having no intelligent

design for it? Then do you tell me that the infinite, all-loving God puts human clay upon the whizzing wheels of life with no governing purpose, no definite plan? Let men believe such a thing and they could say: "Fatalism has hoisted a fool to the throne of the universe." With such a creed, men might well think that God is a being tossing suns and planets in reckless desperation over the fields of space, gloating over the prospect of a universal calamity, when He would have the supreme satisfaction of attending the funeral of all worlds!

But we rest in the high consolation that Christ unveiled no such a God. If there is design for the lily, and design for the bird, and design for the dew, and design for the star, surely there must be design for you and me. If the sparrow can twitter, "I am a thought of God"; if the flower can look upward as if to say, "I am a picture of God"; if the rolling spheres can strike off majestic harmonies as they sing, "The hand that made us is divine,"—then may not we, with infinitely greater reason, look up through Jesus Christ toward that throne "cushioned in splendor behind the stars," and say to that loving Father who sits upon it: "We are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand."

And yet, because the potter has design for the clay as he holds it to the wheels, does not argue that the clay understands that design. What if the clay could hear as the potter says: "It is impossible for you to know what a beautiful vase I will make of you. I know you think this burning and spinning of the wheels are all nonsense. But just be patient and trust the skill of my hand, and when you are finished, men will come from afar and carry you away to adorn some

palace." And what if the clay should answer: "No, potter, I won't trust you, because I can't understand you. I know you can't make a beautiful vase out of such material as I am. Let me alone, potter, I am satisfied." I think we would agree that such clay ought to be given the satisfaction of remaining common, ordinary mud! But the potter loves his clay too much to be thwarted in his purpose. That fine old Flemish ware, that Persian plate, that Rhodian jug, that Roman cup, that Italian majolica, that French pottery must gladden the world with its beauty and its service. And so the fires blister, and the wheels go round, and after a while in some Louvre or British Museum a glorious vase looks down from its pedestal as if to say: "See what the potter has done for me. I was once just common clay and didn't want to be made beautiful. But the potter loved me too much to heed my foolish protest and fashioned my ugliness into this dream of beauty!"

And that, it seems to me, is a parable of our own lives. Because we cannot understand the touch of the Master's hand; because we fail, in our blindness, to glimpse the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"; because we fail to read the intelligent design back of our lives, we ofttimes grow rebellious and say: "God is not in His Heaven, nor is all right with the world." Then is it good for use to know of the patient endurance, the mother love, the holy aspiration of this heroine who was a student in one of our great Industrial Schools. A woman fifty years old went to a teacher and, with tears in her eyes, begged permission to sit down with the little ones five and six years old, that she might learn to read and write. She explained that she had two boys in the West and desired to learn

her letters so that she could communicate with them. Her daughter had done this for her, but three years before the daughter died, and now the hungry-hearted mother was willing to make any sacrifice to keep in touch with her sons. So she entered school without telling any one, even her husband. Four weeks from the day she entered, she was able to read through the primer, first reader, and almost through the second. She soon learned to write so any one could easily read every word. She learned ten new words at home every day, and always knew her lesson perfectly. Having learned to begin and end a letter, it was not long before she could write a love letter—a genuine mother-love-letter—to her boys. Through the goodness of my friend, I have in my possession a yellow sheet of paper containing one of her writing exercises. Reading between the lines, there is something inexpressibly touching about it. The words are such as may be found in the copy-book of any school boy; but the mother, with her hard hands and tender heart, as she copied the words imagined herself writing a letter to one of her sons. After writing her address and the date, this imaginary epistle, brimming with a real love, reads: "My dear son Hugh:

"Be the matter what it may,
Always speak the truth.
If at work or if at play,
Always speak the truth."

Surely, there is no ordinary clay in this vessel! She may not be able to understand the plan of her soul's Divine Potter, but a brave trust and a high hope reside at the center of her being. By the light of her soul she follows on to overtake that glory, the very character

of God inwrought in a human life, which awaits the faithful unto death, who are always and evermore the faithful in life.

III

Consider, finally, what the prophet heard in the house of the potter. "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words." It is as if the Divine Potter had said: "There, amid the burning clay and whirring wheels; there, where the shapeless clay takes form; there, where the form grows into a thing of beauty, I will cause thee to hear My words." Here is the mystery and glory of it all, my friends. The clay hears the call of the potter to become a vase, and at once begins to rise out of unshapeliness into beauty. And the soul hears the voice of its Potter, too, and thence begins the upward climb. The ascent is long and slow, the pathway is ofttimes studded with thorns, but away up beyond the mists and shadows the summit peaks are bathed in splendor. From that far height the Potter's voice sends down the call: "O Soul, meet Me here, meet Me here!" And the soul, with its vision of white thrilling it through and through, pushes onward and upward toward that tearless city of the cloudless land!

When Palissy saw a certain beautiful cup, it is said that the sight of it disturbed his whole existence. Forgetting everything else, the one passion of the great potter's life was to discover the secret of making white enamel with which the cup was glazed. But oh, what failures, what sufferings, what hardships were his! Once he tended his furnace for six long days and nights, without a moment's sleep, his soul singing: "I must win the white, the glorious white!" When poverty

came and his friends forsook him as a visionary, the great heart never for a moment lost his vision of the white. When at last his furniture fed the flames, and his family rushed forth into the streets crying that he had lost his reason, still Palissy pursued his unconquerable quest of the white. And after sixteen years of untiring search, loneliness, and sorrow, the immortal potter found the secret of the white which he had seen upon the little Italian cup in the long past. But better still, at the end of life's journey the whiteness of the potter's soul lit up his prison walls. When Henry III visited him in his cell, hoping to persuade Palissy to renounce Protestantism, the monarch said: "I am constrained to leave you in the hands of your enemies, and to-morrow you will be burned unless you become converted." "Sire," answered Palissy, "I am ready to give my life for the glory of God. You have said many times that you have pity on me; and now I have pity on you, who have pronounced the words I am constrained! It is not spoken like a king; it is what you, and those who constrain you, the Guisards and all your people, can never effect upon me, for I know how to die." Having spent years and years looking for the white, Palissy found it at last in a City whose maker and builder is God.

I know that to some of us life seems one prolonged journey to the potter's house, where we touch the spinning wheels of mystery and feel the blistering fires of pain. But never mind, my friends, the universe itself is laboring to build a City worthy to be your home. According to St. John, that city is fair beyond a lover's dream of love, and pure beyond the dimpled smile stealing over a babe's face in sleep. In his vision, the City seemed to be as airy as a sunbeam and as solid as

a marble mountain. For though he beheld it coming down out of heaven from God, the wall of the City had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. It seemed as if God had swept the worlds for jewels with which to adorn the foundations of that wall. The first foundation was jasper, and the second sapphire, and the third chalcedony, and the fourth emerald, and the fifth sardonyx, and the sixth sardius, and the seventh chrysolite, and the eighth beryl, and the ninth topaz, and the tenth chrysoprase, and the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

But grander than the architecture, and next to the Lamb himself, I think the most majestic scene in John's vision of the City is the countless throng of the kings and queens of pain. Grander than the four angels holding the four winds of the earth; more commanding than that mighty angel ascending out of the sunrise, having in his hand the seal of the living God; more magnificent than splendored foundations and jasper walls and gates of pearl and streets of gold, is that great multitude which no man could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, saying: "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb!" When one of the elders asked, "These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" John answered: "My lord, thou knowest." And the elder himself made reply: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The prevailing color in the City of God is pure white, and the whitest whiteness is wrought in Calvary's crimson stream. *O, let us win the white!*

THE VISION SPLENDID[1]

As He passed through it, there was a man called Zacchæus, the head of the tax-gatherers, a wealthy man, who tried to see what Jesus was like.—St. Luke xix. 2, 3 (Moffatt's Translation).

In approaching our text, three facts require consideration. The first is the city of Jericho itself. Nestling in the heart of opulent groves of palm and balsam trees, Jericho was prosperous, priestly, and proud. Both religion and commerce contributed to the famous city's prosperity. Of the twenty-four courses of the Jewish priesthood officiating by turns in the Temple, probably one-half made the City of Palm Trees their home. Their opposition to Christ was bitter and intense. Perhaps He is passing through it because their enmity made it impossible for Him to remain in the place over night. The commercial importance of Jericho is evidenced by the large staff of tax-gatherers who resided there for the purpose of collecting the revenue accruing from the balsam trade.

This brings us to the second fact—the man Zacchæus, chief of the revenue-collectors. As a Jewish officer of the Roman government, not unnaturally he was hated and despised by his own people. And now, as the multitudes throng about Jesus, the little tax-gatherer is buzzing in and out in his efforts to catch a glimpse of Him. As he hurries first to one point and then

[1] Preached in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, Sunday morning, November 20, 1921.

another, he is physically jostled and pushed even while he is at the same time verbally lashed with epithets of hatred and contempt. But he was determined to see Jesus! And that is the one determination absolutely certain of fulfillment to the human soul. Other determinations may and do fail, but this one—the noblest of all—is sure of realization. So, as the Master was unable to find a lodging place in the city and was already passing through it, Zacchæus bethought him of a sycamore tree he knew out beyond the city walls. That tree, he concluded, would at last make him tall enough to see Jesus. Running around the crowd that ruthlessly thwarted him, he climbed to his place of vantage and waited.

This, as you see, brings us to the third fact in our text. It is the Master Himself! Inasmuch as He is the sole apology for this or any other sermon, our third and transcendent fact will disclose itself as we proceed with our discussion. For the text, in describing Zacchæus' desire *"to see what Jesus was like,"* declares "The Vision Splendid" for all souls who will have it.

I

Jesus is like a blessed surprise. Goaded by curiosity, Zacchæus wanted to see the outer, external Jesus—the teacher, the reformer, the miracle-worker—and lo! he sees an astonishing Jesus. For the Master surprised both Zacchæus and the multitude. Little did the tax-gatherer imagine that, while he was being hustled to and fro by the hostile crowd, there was One Who thoughtfully grasped his unhappy predicament and resolved to single him out for peculiar honors that very day. Before Zacchæus climbed his tree, and while

words of derision and contempt were being poured upon him by his fellow countrymen, the Master saw him.

And is it not always so? Even before a man ever tries to see the Christ, already the Savior is watching him, eager to seize the earliest moment when the man will hear and understand His appeal. "But when Jesus reached the spot He looked up and said to him, Zacchæus, come down at once, for I must stay at your house to-day." Likewise the people, also, were surprised at Jesus. "But when they saw this, everyone began to mutter that He had gone to be the guest of a sinner." In other words, much of our religion is only skin-deep. We reckon that the God of the universe is reducible to the dimensions of a theological capsule, daintily compounded by pharisaic apothecaries. Such a God, we aver, is for the elect only—those neatly-fitting, kid-gloved souls who fit into almost any place other than the heavens of reality. But we are mistaken! The God of Christ is after "the sinner"—big and little, young and old, rich and poor, no matter what his color, creed, or condition. So Jesus profoundly surprised the despisers of Zacchæus that day in the long ago; He has been doing it ever since; He will continue to do it until human beings realize that the Christian religion is not an afternoon-tea-affair, but so awful and glorious that the universe must remain incomplete as long as one soul is unreconciled to the God of Love.

Would you, too, see what the ageless surprise of Jesus is like? Well, you may! For the living, eternal Jesus continues to come as a blessed surprise to the souls of men. Think of that first century group—Peter, James, John, and Paul. One of the most arresting things in their companionship with the Master is

this: Little by little He unfolded Himself to them as the Great Unfathomable. Peter thought He understood Jesus better than Jesus understood Himself; and so the apostle even dared to modify the Master's purpose. The scene is all the more memorable because it followed the great confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi. While the air was still melodious with that great outburst of personal faith, Jesus began to show the Twelve that He was going to Jerusalem and there would be done to death by the elders and high priests and scribes. But Peter at once voiced his disapproval as awhile ago he expressed his immortal commendation. "God forbid, Lord," he said. "This must not be." That very instant Peter got another look into the unsounded depths of Christ! "But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, you Satan! You are a hindrance to Me! Your outlook is not God's but man's." I think Peter never forgot that moment; yea, is it not still vivid to him as he ranges the great ways of Eternity? It was like opening a golden door in the Temple of the Infinite. A sudden, undreamed splendor flamed out of the Soul of Jesus upon the trembling disciple. Peter was dazzled as he leaned over the edge of being and beheld a new apocalypse of what Jesus was like.

But the surprise of Jesus is not confined to the apostolic era. In every age He breaks upon the souls of men with new and compelling wonder. And why? Because, in Christ, men are able to make deeper explorations into the true nature of God. For humanity is evermore attempting to discover what God is like. Here is the one subject to which men are always returning; it will not let them go; nor can they let it go. Who is this Being Who is continuously passing

through the Jerichos of history, in Whose wake the millions eagerly follow, century in and century out, endeavoring to understand Him? There are many evidences of God in the universe; there are innumerable tokens of the Presence of God in human life in all ages and peoples. Yet is it not an absolute fact that the souls having the most satisfying vision of God are those who came upon their vision through Christ? The surprise of Jesus is in His disclosure of God. As there is one supreme law of gravity holding atoms and stars together, so there is one supreme Mediator between God and Man—the Man Christ Jesus. Therefore, in seeing what Jesus is like, men are made gloriously aware of what God is like.

Once more let me ask: Would you see what the miraculous surprise of Jesus is like? Then be a modern Zacchæus; be a spiritual pioneer; do something in the name of your own soul. Climb the Tree of Trust. Run around the crowd that jostles and condemns. Forsake the priest, the scribe, the Pharisee; get clear out beyond the city walls; make for your own sycamore of faith; and there, amid the green, fragrant realities of being, God shall find you and go home with you. Forget your theories, your metaphysics, your philosophy, even your theology; at least, forget them long enough to give our soul a chance. Once you are in the presence of Jesus, you will be enabled to use your speculations without being hopelessly used by them. If they are true, Christ will transfigure and enlarge them; if they are false, He will release their deadening grip upon you. This is that experience of "life eternal" which Jesus imports into human nature out of the Divine Consciousness. Call it mysticism, call it anything you choose; but after calling it all the

names you can think of, remember that words cannot exhaust the reality. "We don't know," says a modern prophet, "how the death of Christ finds compensations for the past of us. There are times when we have glimpses of the method, and instantly we find ourselves on the frontiers of the unknowable. We need not be overwise. We know that our yesterdays are not dead, that there is no funeral we can give them. Our perplexities are from the back years, the wastes, the neglects, the slights, from riot and pride, from the ashes of burnt-out fires; also from propagations and transmissions. But the life and death of Christ are translated into us as the confidences of redemption, and as a hope that the wastefulness of life is redeemed. Then it is our jubilee, a jubilation of the soul. Then forfeited estates revert to their owners, the fee-simple of which is not allowed to be sold. This confidence is inspired by our fellowship with Christ, by the loving gaze of the soul upon Him."

It is all so refreshingly big with the wonder of the childlike. In company with some friends, I took a doll to a little girl whose mother is "dead," as we say; though this little five-year-old insists that her mother is not dead, but in Heaven. Ah, I wonder if out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God not only ordains strength, but speaks a wisdom which the wise cannot know! Well, this doll is so made that when you turn it upside down, it utters a tiny, humanlike cry. "Now that," exclaimed the little girl, as the doll gave a cry, "is just what I wanted!" And there is something of the childlike in the human soul which responds to the surprise of Jesus with wonder and tears. In their eager quest after God, men follow many paths. Still unsatisfied and prompted by the childlike nestling

within them, at last they climb their lovely tree of simple trust—far out beyond the conventional, beyond the lifeless forms of religion, beyond the city's pride and prejudice; and there, embowered within their fragrant branches of eagerness and hope, the Eternal Love finds them, as they adoringly cry: "Why, this is just what I wanted—the strong tones of Deity through a tender human voice!"

II

Moreover, Jesus is like an untold gladness in the heart. Zacchæus "came down at once and welcomed Him gladly." There is something very touching about the new-found gladness of the tax-collector. Though successful and wealthy, life had proven a disappointment to Zacchæus; and now a little wind of gladness begins to stir in the branches of his soul! When the people protested against the unseemly relations so quickly established between the Master and the social outcast, Zacchæus stopped and said to the Lord: "I will give the half of all I have, Lord, to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will give him back four times as much." Why, the joy of Jesus had run clean down to the roots of his soul; and already that joy is beginning to disclose itself in high resolves and honest deeds.

Well, Jesus is still like an untold gladness to men and women who have found life hard and disillusioning. We are trying to find a moral equivalent for war. It is one of the imperative necessities for mankind. And we shall surely find it, if we look in the right direction. That direction is Christ, and Christ alone. We are working for a better industrial order. But we are

not going to find a solution by merely shifting the emphasis from one phase of the economic aspect to another. We must reckon with the mysterious stuff of human nature; we must correct the delusion that poverty and wealth are all, or the major, matters. *We must find a soul-equivalent for human life in all its terror and glory.* For life is hard, at best. Full of mystery and agony and disappointment, only shallow people picture life as rosy or auroral. Either they have not worthily lived and thought, or else there is lack of capacity for measuring the vast problems of existence. But we must add to the sheer hardness of being this other dark item: The ruin which man's own deliberate wrong-doing wreaks upon humanity. Then indeed is the original difficulty of life indefinitely augmented. Nursing a blind fury in the brain, then do men cry aloud against the cruelty of nature, the inhumanity of man, the impossibility of discovering God.

Now, we must not only have the moral equivalent for a sullen mood like this; we must have the power of an endless life penetrating to the inmost core of such a mood and regenerating the hidden motives of being. We have such a Power! The Person of God in Christ Jesus reaches down into the dry soil of humanity and waters it so thoroughly that the dryness gives place to a heavenly vitality. Thus, even as the wrongs of men are our despair, so the joy of the Lord becomes our strength. When things are so bad that hell is not a theory but a fact, let us stand still and see the salvation of God. And if you think it is an easy task to stand still—to wait and watch even while you work and pray—it is accusing evidence that you have never even glimpsed the moral centers of the universe, much less

taken your stand upon those glowing centers as the ultimate meaning of life.

Would you know, then, what the untold gladness of Jesus is like? Climb the Tree of Obedience. Listen to the whisper of God in your own soul. Seek the thing that is fair and just and beautiful. There, in the branches of your tree—outside the city of theory or science or even religion itself, if it be nothing more than a kind of palsied Jericho-priestcraft mumbling about in our twentieth-century world—*there,* there in the stillness and the bloom and the wonder, God shall set spiritual larks warbling in your soul—larks of that heavenly dawn which foretell the perfect day.

The joy of Jesus in the human heart is one of the creative facts of these two thousand years. Again and again men have seen everything go from this earth but the joy of Jesus. Civilizations have vanished; kingdoms have waxed and waned; empires have been entombed; learning and might and power and genius have stood aghast at the riddle of existence. Yet the imprint of Christ's joy in the soul of man cannot be destroyed. Malign forces have always been able to kill the bodies of men; but no power in earth or hell has been able to kill the joy of Jesus in souls who trust him. Like those antique harmonies originally played into the spheres when the morning stars sang together, the Master's untold gladness is woven into the fiber and fabric of Christianized personality. This fact is somewhat elucidated in the history of art. For generations critics have debated whether "The Virgin of the Rocks" in the National Gallery was a genuine Leonardo. This picture is practically a duplicate of an authentic Leonardo in the Louvre. The English gallery had paid $45,000 for its painting; so

there was a monetary as well as an artistic value attached to the dispute. The argument for and against the English painting's genuineness has gone on among the connoisseurs so long that there seemed to be no final judgment available.

Now, however, authorities maintain that the question has been settled by the aid of the finger print system. Sir Charles Holmes "knew that much of the exquisite modeling of the oil painting had been done by softening the still wet paint with finger and thumb tips." So the eminent art critic went about his task in a scientific manner. First of all, he chose six of Da Vinci's paintings about which there is no question whatever. Scotland Yard's experts then examined the finger prints of the six; then they went to the Louvre, where they studied the unquestioned Leonardo; last of all, they came back to the English gallery, took the finger prints of the much-disputed "Virgin of the Rocks," and pronounced it genuine.

Dead for four centuries, even Leonardo's touch upon canvas cannot be obliterated. But alive forevermore, our Lord and Master keeps the joy-bells chiming in His renovated temples of human nature. No century and no civilization has been utterly deaf to their immortal melodies; and I doubt not that their volume will increase with the ages, until at last their golden tollings shall ring throughout the whole of creation's immeasurable bounds. With such tenderness as a dying mother soothes her weeping children, Jesus gathered His frightened, sorrowing disciple-band within the vast heavens of His heart and consoled them with these words: "And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you."

Has He not been seeing His lovers again and again, in joy and sorrow, in sickness and health, in poverty and abundance, in youth and age, in prison and palace, these sixty generations through? Would you see what Jesus is like, what the vision splendid really is? Climb the Tree of Obedience. In due season you will be lifted so close to the City of God that the Tree of Life shall mysteriously drop its luscious fruit into the lap of thy soul!

III

Appraising this very human scene outside the walls of Jericho, we find, furthermore, that Jesus is like generosity itself. Weigh the protest of the crowd toward Jesus' treatment of Zacchæus; consider that the muddy waters of hatred and contempt were boiling up from racial and religious depths—fierce, seething, oriental depths at that; and then consider that the spirit of restitution on the part of Zacchæus was just the tax-gatherer's own reaction to the Master's magnanimity. Consider this, I say, and you will be face to face with one of the undying splendors of the Christian's Christ.

For what is the fact? Just this: Unnumbered millions of human beings have beautifully forsaken their native human stinginess in the Presence of Jesus. To make a mean man high-minded; to make a selfish man unselfish; to make a vulgar man dignified; to make a parsimonious man generous; to make a false man true; to make a lazy man industrious; to make a lustful man pure; to make an avaricious man open-handed; to make a jealous man unenvious; to make an atheist a believer—to do this is surely the task of a God; and only the Very and Eternal God, after infinite wooing and manifold approaches, can perform such an ardu-

ous task. For, mark you, once the soul has received a definite bent, has taken a certain stride down the road of destiny, to change that bent and transform that stride, something more than high resolves and sugar-coated moral condiments are necessary. Indeed no work in the universe is at all comparable to this. Vast modifications of matter, in comparison, are mole-hill tasks. Scientific discoveries, involving all the patience and skill of the finely trained intellect, are as child's play set over against this essential transformation of the soul. Take, for example, the matter of avarice and its corroding power in human nature. A friend of mine sought the aid of a very wealthy man in what he has termed "an exceedingly noble cause." The rich man answered the plea as if he were on the verge of poverty itself. "I really cannot give any more!" he said. "What with one thing and another, I do not know what we are coming to!" A short time afterward the man died, leaving an estate valued at more than sixty millions of dollars! Yet the man was not insincere when he expressed the feeling that he could not give another dollar to a noble cause; he was just the victim of the atrophying power of avarice in the human soul. Dr. Jowett's experience recalls the story that an eminent English physician related to Dean Farrar. The physician said that at night his patient, unable to sleep, persisted in nervously rubbing his hands and twitching his fingers. The doctor wondered what it all meant. Then the patient's son explained the strange habit. "My father," he said, "is in the habit of fondling a fifty pound note as he goes to sleep." So a note was placed in the sick man's hand; he went to sleep; and he never woke up again—in this world!

How to arrest the stain of avarice; how to uproot the fungus of selfishness; how to destroy the briers of lust; how to kill out the weeds of jealousy; how to eradicate the stubble from which only the stalks of sin have been cut; how, in a word, to change a poor, stingy mortal into one of God's generous immortals, homing here and now in the flesh—this is a work calling for the patience and wisdom and love of God. Believe me, my friends, Somebody has to wrestle with Zacchæus not only as he is to-day; but with the Zacchæus of to-day, plus all his crooked yesterdays, that he may not carry through Eternity his yesterdays, his to-days, and his to-morrows multiplied by failure, tragedy, and wrongdoing, even though his life in this world be crowned with brilliant success.

Is there a Somebody equal to this tremendous undertaking? Yes! A thousand times—yes! Would you see what that Somebody is like—Somebody Who inhabits Eternity even as He whispers to a defeated soul: "All which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Then climb your own Tree of Restitution! Betake yourself into His presence, and you yourself shall see what the generosity of Jesus is like. Why, is it not like that astronomic old billionaire named the sun? I have seen him billowing the west with waves of molten splendor; and even his afterglow sets the eastern skies afire with flaming islands and burning mountains of color. Then I laid me down and slept and lo! the glory and freshness of a new morning was here. Our little planet had swung around the sun, swallowing huge mouthfuls of beauty and light in its journey. But is the light of the sun only for these immense prairies of the West? Is it only for mag-

nificently fronting palaces of the East? Oh, no, the generosity of the sun is like the democracy of God. It searches out every kink and corner, every hole and cobweb, every weed and worm, as well as every pauper and millionaire, and says: "I am brother to the Rain. As my Sister Rain falls upon the just and the unjust, I shine upon the evil and the good. We are like our Father Who is in Heaven." Oh, climb your Tree of Self-Giving! You may then see what Jesus is like. He will translate the magnanimity of God Himself as an assurance in your own soul.

IV

Finally, Jesus is like a new world. "And Jesus said of him, To-day salvation has come to this house, since Zacchæus here is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost." From that hour the tax-gatherer began to live in a new world. That hard old inhuman world, with its bitterness and scorn and contempt, felt the thrill of a transfiguring newness running through all its veins and arteries.

Now why is Jesus like a new world dawning upon the human spirit? Because he creates the absolute condition of a new spiritual world—He makes the human over; He infuses the heart with a sense of new values and appreciations. Life is full of such transformations in other and lesser directions. Think of Keats the hour he looked into Chapman's Homer. Why did he then write his immortal sonnet? Simply because Keats had experienced a literary rebirth. Why was Raphael proud that he lived in the times of Michelangelo? Because the master—"the greatest mind that art ever inspired," said Ruskin—was the

source of an artistic regeneration to the younger painter. History and life are packed with these rejuvenations wrought by man on man, by woman on woman. Yet it is in Christ alone that this heavenly force manifests itself with universal and redemptive splendor in society and in the individual. "At the Reformation," remarked Goldwin Smith, "Greece rose from the dead with the Greek New Testament in her hand." "The sure harbinger of a revival of religion," says Professor Glover, "is a revival of interest in Jesus Christ." What are these two scholars saying but just this: At the Reformation men began to reconsider Jesus, and the graves of a moribund society gave up their dead; and to-day, as in the past, if men desire a genuine revival of religion, they must have a revival of interest in Jesus. He is God's way with the soul; and is it not a fact of history to add that He is the most effective way God has yet disclosed to mankind?

Estimate, then, the value of the new world Jesus creates for two familiar human types of our day—the man or woman whose goal is worldly success. Let us assume that this ideal was an inheritance, a training, or both. They set out from the cradle to capture the so-called good things of the world. And they have succeeded—some of them beyond their wildest dreams. What then? Why, they discover that worldly success is not enough; there is an unsatisfied hunger within; life is expressing itself in tones of tragedy—a wild, meaningless fury, an idiot's tale all too slowly and jabberingly told. To exchange such a zone of desolation for a world full of budding hope and noble vision and creative faith is "a consummation devoutly to be wished." But how is the exchange to be made? By

Christ—in Christ—through Christ! He makes all things new by smiting the soul through and through with His everlasting newness.

A second type is illustrated in those who think change of environment is all that is required. Now there is so much hideous, ugly environment which ought to be transformed that we should waste no time debating the subject. We must do this work, and be about it now. And is there not so much of it to be done that the task is of almost overwhelming dimensions? And yet the only method of realizing the right kind of a transformed environment is the method of Jesus. "Change the soul," He seems to say, "and the changed soul will change its setting." I do not mean that this is solely an inner, spiritual matter; it is that, first and foremost, to be sure; *I mean that a clean soul will send its cleanliness soaking through things.* On the other hand, clean bodies with unclean souls exude a moral filth that sullies the most propitious environment.

Would you see what the new world Jesus creates is like? Climb the Fragrant Tree of Holy Adventure! Be a spiritual pioneer! Prove your soul! Act as if God were, and you shall know that He is! You, too, are a spiritual son of Abraham; God is looking for you, His "lost" child; Jesus sees you in that motley multitude—accused by your own sins, cudgeled by ancestral clubs, mocked by heartless circumstances, deceived by wealth and fame, and a companion of haunting midnights. He sees you, my friend, even though you are too spiritually small to see over the tops of these things to get a satisfying view of Him. He is waiting for the psychological moment when, in the presence of all opposition, He can invite you down

from your sycamore tree and go Home with you—Home together—Home in God's Heart forevermore!

Once there went out from these midwestern prairies a man who represented his country in the United States Senate. He was the son of a minister, like a multitude of great and holy men and women throughout the world. The old father was visiting his son in Washington. One evening the father returned from church just as a diplomat from one of the Latin countries was leaving his son's home. The old minister, who had been deeply stirred by the services at the church, met them in the hall. The Senator introduced his father and the diplomat greeted the venerable man with the urbanity characteristic of his race. Without a word of warning, the father asked the diplomat in almost stentorian tones: "Are you a Christian?" The man of the world was thrown off his guard for a moment, but recovering his native politeness, replied: "I am a Catholic." Gently placing his hand upon the diplomat's shoulder, the man of God continued: "That is all right, my brother. I do not care whether you are a Catholic or a Protestant. *How is it with your soul?*" The diplomat said his good night and returned home. But the very next day the old preacher was taken with his last illness. Every day the diplomat called to inquire, leaving a bunch of flowers. As the servant of God lay dead in his casket, the statesman came to the Senator's home and asked permission with some member of the family to enter the death chamber. He knelt and kissed the dead hand, placed a wreath upon the calm brow, and then went out sobbing like a child as he said: "He was the first man who ever asked me a question about my soul."

Ah, yes, in the final examination it is soul, and soul

alone, that counts. And Christ is Lord and Master and Savior of the soul—of *your* soul, of *all* souls. Have you tried and failed? Well, try it again! And I pray that this golden admonition of a preacher-poet may help you:

I played with my blocks, I was but a child;
Houses I builded, castles I piled;
But they tottered and fell, all my labor was vain—
But my father said kindly, "We'll try it again!"

I played with my days—what's time to a lad?
Why pore over books? Play, play, and be glad!
Till my youth was all spent like a sweet summer rain—
Yet my father said kindly, "We'll try it again!"

I played with my chance—such gifts as were mine
To win with, to work with, to serve the Divine,
I seized for myself, for myself they have lain—
But my Father says kindly, "We'll try it again!"

I played with my soul, the soul that is I,
The best that is in me, I smothered its cry;
I lulled it, I dulled it, and now, O the pain!—
But my Father says kindly, "We'll try it again!"

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